MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

The Illustrated
Encyclopedia
of Mythology, Religion
and the Unknown

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VOLUME 18

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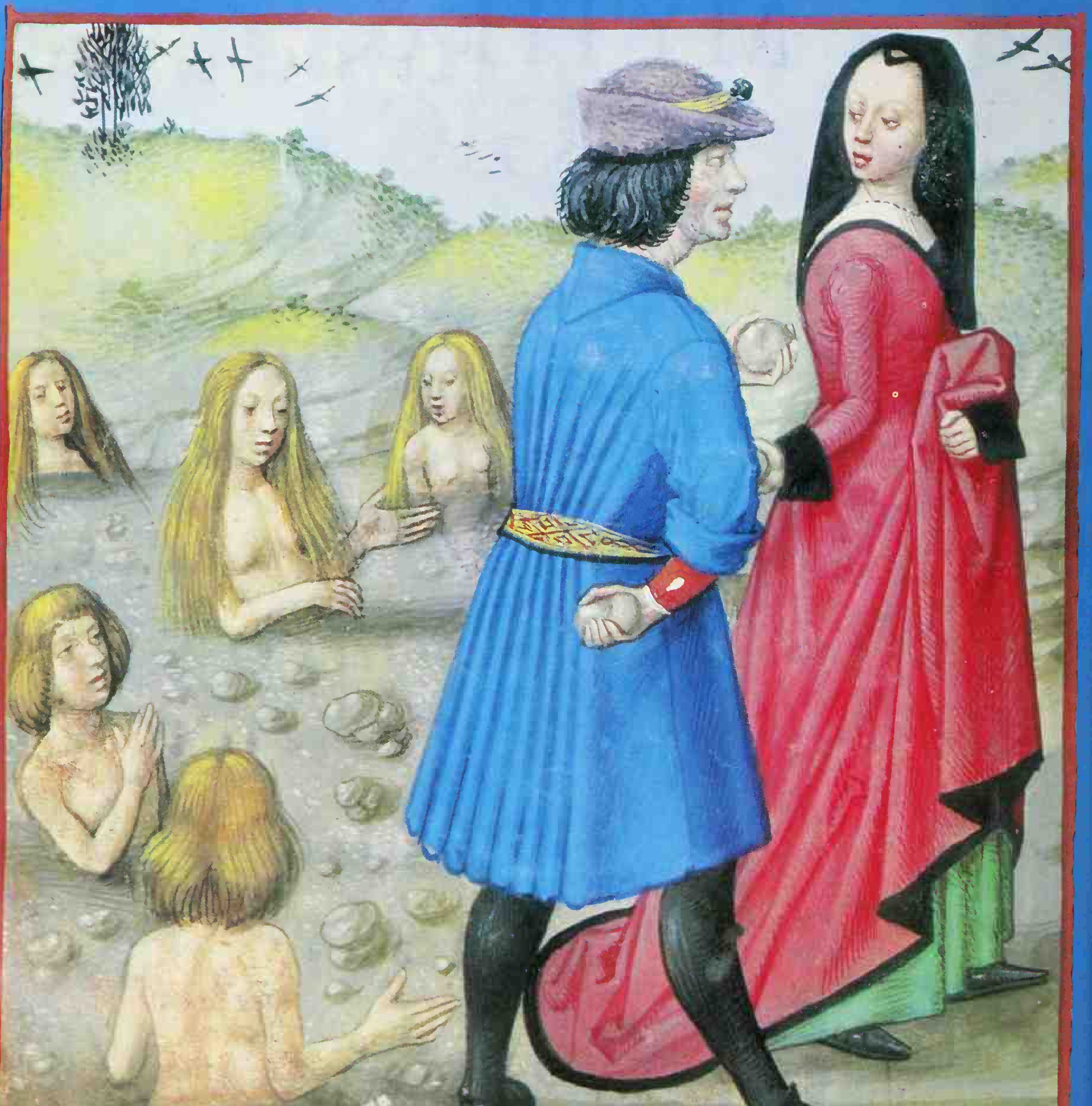

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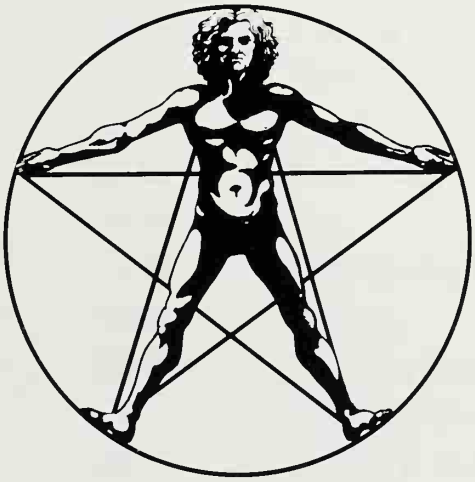

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology, Religion and the Unknown

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SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES

Death or danger is somehow foreseen in dreams or hallucinations, people become aware of things which they have no normal means of knowing, messages are apparently received from the dead, a picture falls off the wall at the moment of a death: many curious experiences of this sort may be the result of an obscure mechanism of the human mind

SPONTANEOUS PSYCHIC experiences include widely diversified kinds of unusual occurrences. They range over unaccountable 'awarenesses', true dreams, seemingly uncaused movements of physical objects, and unexplainable sights and sounds sometimes taken to be caused by the dead. The common element in all of them, however, is that by them the persons involved secure information not revealed by their senses, or produce effects not mediated by their muscles. This is the characteristic that divides these experiences from sensorimotor ones on the one hand, and instances of fantasy, imagination or delusion on the other.

Historically, psychic experiences had no rational explanation, since the phenomena were not caused by the senses or muscles, and therefore seemed mysterious, even supernatural. Research in parapsychology, however, has thrown light on their nature and origin. They turn out to be the result of normal but obscure mental processes, that do not operate like the sensorimotor ones but have their own laws and regularities. These processes constitute what is known as psi ability, the subject of parapsychological research.

Spontaneous experiences have played a part in psi research and will continue to do so, even though the individual reports of them cannot produce conclusive reliability. Human testimony is fallible and the psi element is difficult to identify with finality. In large numbers of cases, however, the importance of individual or personal variations, even inaccuracies and mistakes, diminishes, while common aspects stand out and make the identification of psi more certain. In fact, the relationship between this mental function as demonstrated in the laboratory and as evidenced in spontaneous experiences is, in a way, a reciprocal one. The experiences came under observation and study first, and because of their strangeness they were hard to take seriously as actual occurrences. The question of their validity led eventually to experimental tests, and the experiments eventually showed that there could well be something more to many of the manifestations that had been called psychic than a mixture of imagination, exaggeration and fraud. They showed, in short, that the human mind has two general types of psi ability, that of getting information without the senses through extrasensory perception, or ESP, and that of influencing physical objects without contact through psychokinesis, or PK (see EXTRASENSORY PERCEPTION; PSYCHOKINESIS).

The experimental work, besides showing that psi ability exists, has also led to a degree of understanding of it, so that the experiences can now be taken as the probable spontaneous natural operation of a known human capacity. At the present stage their range offers a wider perspective on psi ability than the experimental researches have as yet verified. Therefore they can be the source of further suggestions about the still unknown aspects of it, suggestions that will be supported or discarded later according to the outcome of future experimental testing.

An Unconscious Process

It is easy to see now why psychic manifestations have been baffling and mysterious, because it is now recognized that the psi process is an unconscious one. The person does not know when it operates or that he himself was involved in the operation. It was largely because of this unconscious origin that psi was long unsuspected and its effects generally misunderstood and often misinterpreted. For because the person is unaware of his own role in the production of a psi effect the tendency has been to assume it to be something imposed upon or communicated to him from the outside. This has been particularly true when a dying or dead person seemed to play an active role in the phenomena or when it was possible to suppose that such an influence was involved.

Besides the mystery raised by the unconscious operation of psi, the manifestations themselves took many different forms and no unifying underlying principle was obvious. Only after decades of controlled research has it been established that the phenomena are the result of an underlying mental process (the psi process), expressed in various ways in different situations.

The concept of the psi process can be simplified by considering it as consisting of two stages. Stage 1 is that in which an item of information somehow becomes 'accessible', at an unconscious level. How this can occur is the true unknown of the psychic process.

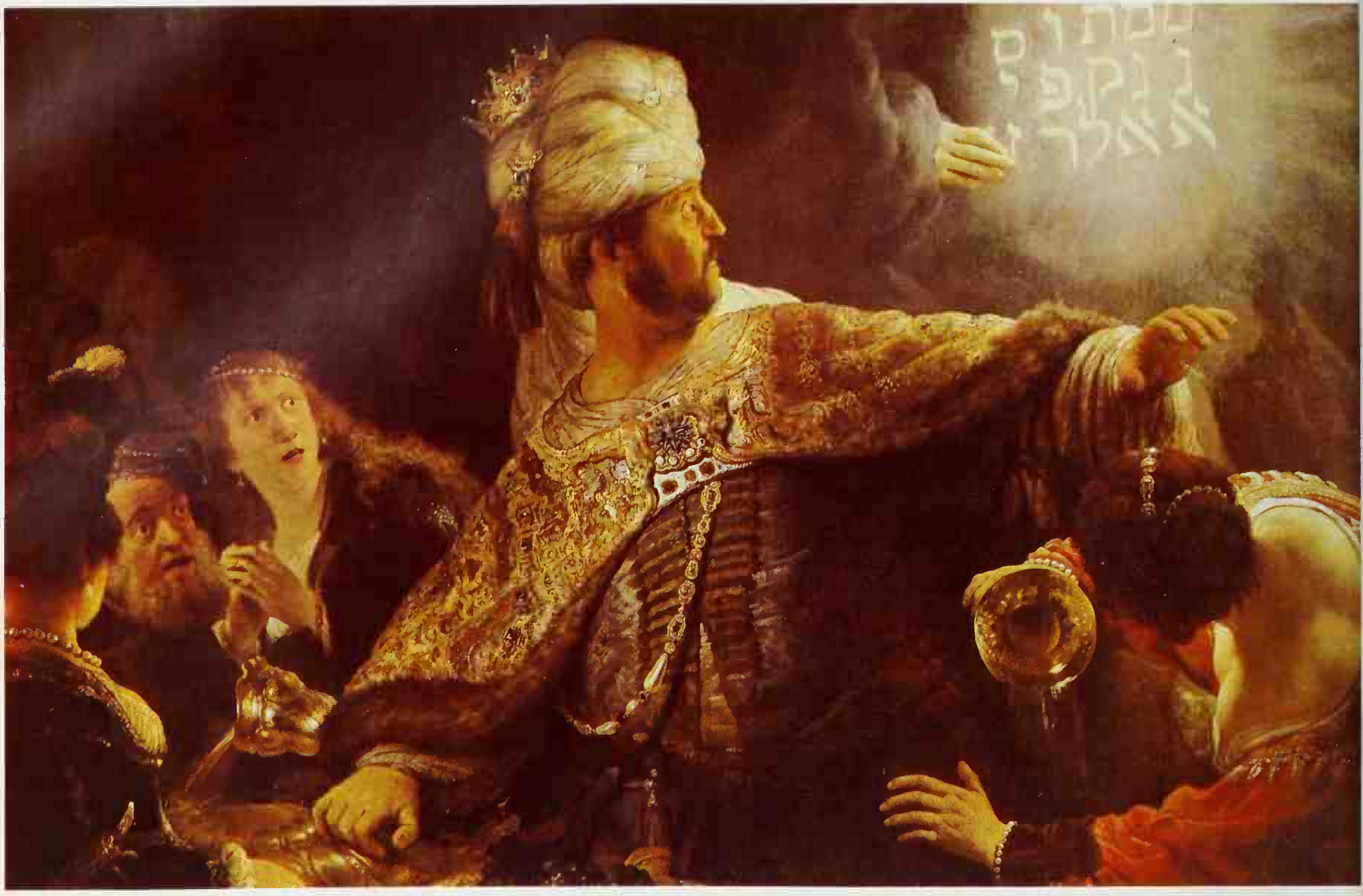
Also unknown are the factors or influences that permit one specific item to be 'chosen', picked out from all others, as the topic of a given experience. Stage 2 is a psychological rather than a parapsychological one, for in it the selected item is transferred to consciousness in a psychological form or as a physical effect. Nearly all of the facts about the psi process that have now been established concern this psychological stage.

Classifying Psi Events

Even though psi effects occur in what superficially appear to be a great many different ways, the seeming confusion they represent is largely dispelled once the basic underlying processes are understood. First of all, although the two main types of psi are very different in their obvious effects, ESP being cognitive and PK physical, still they can now be recognized as two different aspects of the same basic psi process. Consequently, the phenomena produced by each are related. Then the phenomena of these two basic types, particularly those of ESP, can be even further classified into sub-types.

ESP experiences have been distinguished on the basis of the kind of subject matter involved. It may be an object or event, it may involve the thought of another person, or it may concern an event still in the future, and be clairvoyant, telepathic, or precognitive accordingly. And since ESP experiences are not limited by time, they are not limited by space, but may involve events at any distance. All three ESP types thus are in sharp contrast to sense perception, which is limited to events happening in the present and within a relatively short distance. Psi thus denotes an extraphysical aspect to human nature.

The following is an example of the clairvoyant type of experience, for in it the person's mind somehow 'made contact' directly with the object. A man in Ontario operated a sawmill in the woods, and occasionally stayed at the logging camp with the workmen. One day he found his wallet missing. After searching for it in vain, he gave up hope of finding it. About two weeks



later he dreamed it was at the bottom of the well at the camp. The dream was so vivid that the next morning he drove the 13 miles to the camp. He baled out the water from the well and found the wallet, though he never knew how it got there.

Precognition cases can be illustrated by the experience of an Ohio woman. She reported that one Sunday morning in Cleveland, while her mother was in church, her mother's new Oldsmobile was stolen from the parking lot. The police held out little hope of finding it. But two nights later the daughter dreamed that the car was at a certain location in downtown Cleveland. Telling her husband of her dream the next day, she drove to the place and found the car. However, the bystanders testified that it had only been parked there minutes before she came. The dream showed where it would be, not where it was. The case is typical, except that the time interval may cover years as well as minutes.

An instance of the telepathic type of case is the experience reported by a teacher in New Jersey. She was teaching spelling to her class by giving out a list of words for the children to spell. As she pronounced the words, slowly walking up and down the aisles, she saw that one little boy, Ralph, had misspelled the word 'grief'. But when she asked how many of the children had all the words correct, he raised his hand. She said, 'You missed one, Ralph.' He looked puzzled and she said, 'You misspelled grief.' They examined his paper and the word was not on it. Then a light broke over his face, 'Oh, now I remember. I wasn't sure how to spell it and as I was thinking you gave out the next word and I wrote it and forgot the other.' She asked him how he thought it should be spelled and he misspelled it just as she thought he had, though he had never written it, for he had written in ink and there were no erasures.

Who is the Initiator?

In all three types of experience, it is as if the experiencing person's mind 'reaches out' and makes contact with the item of information. However, in some telepathy cases, because of the second person involved, the superficial impression is given that the action is initiated by him rather than by the experiencing person. An example was given by a woman in New Brunswick. She had gone downtown with a friend to do some shopping. Her husband was at home where he had a battery to recharge and replace in the car. Suddenly she knew she had to go home. She rushed off, regardless of her friend's remonstrances, and found her husband unconscious in his car in the garage. She was in time to get help and save him. She found that he had closed the garage door, thinking there would be ample air, but carbon monoxide fumes overcame him. The last thought he remembered was an urgent call to his wife to come home.

Apparently the wife was not thinking of her husband when she got the urge to go home, and presumably it was at the time that her husband in his extremity was calling to her. Thus the obvious suggestion would be that his mind, not hers, 'reached out', and that her impulse to go home was a response to his message. Because of cases like this one, the experiencing person was called the receiver or percipient, and the second person the agent. These terms, however, are misnomers, for the sending is not the crucial part of the process, as was illustrated by the case of the teacher in New Jersey. The telepathic reception, just like that of the clairvoyant and precognitive types, can occur without it; although, possibly, it adds to the likelihood that the thought will be 'noticed' or picked up by the experiencing person.

Of course, to describe the psi process as one in which the experiencing person's mind 'reaches out' is only to employ a figure of speech based on sense experience, in which distance intervenes between the person and his environment. In ESP distance as such is not a factor. The language, however, lacks a word for mental contact without distance.

Cases cannot always be exactly classified as to type. For instance, experiences are often reported in which both a thought and an objective event are involved, so that it is

Visual and other hallucinations sometimes carry a powerful and terrifying sense of impending danger, which may prove to have been justified: King Belshazzar sees a hand writing on the wall of his palace during a drunken feast; painting by Rembrandt

not clear whether the situation was one involving telepathy or clairvoyance. The type of such a case cannot be determined exactly and consequently it can only be classified as general ESP (GESP). Today, in the attempt to understand the psi process, it makes little difference just how an individual case is classified. The important point is simply that the types of ESP show its potentially great reach.

The PK type of psi is still in a comparatively early stage of investigation. The meaning or content of spontaneous PK experiences usually concerns the crisis of another person, and usually is one of strong emotional quality for the experiencing person. The situations thus tend to be similar to those of telepathy, and in any event their associated meaning falls within those of the types of ESP. Potentially, the phenomena of PK fall into three sub-types, which are based on the state of the object affected. It may be moving, or at rest, or it may be a complex combination of the two in living tissue or organisms.

Research on falling objects has now well demonstrated the PK effect, and more recently experiments have been reported on living organisms, in which positive results have been secured. If they are confirmed they should be significant for the treatment of disease, and have bearing on a wide range of psychosomatic functions. As yet no laboratory tests have been reported in which static objects have been caused to move under adequately controlled conditions – though, of course, many spontaneous cases that seem to involve PK deal with the movement of static objects.

Intuitions and Hallucinations

Psi experiences vary not only in the type of information they bring, but also in the way or form of manifestation. This is the product of the psychological process of Stage 2 by which the information secured by ESP in Stage 1 is manifested. Different forms are shown even in the three cases of ESP already given. The man who found his lost wallet did so by a dream. The woman who went home when her husband was in danger did so because of a strong intuitive compulsion. The teacher who knew her pupil misspelled a word 'saw' it written on his paper so realistically she was convinced that her eyes had actually seen it.

ESP experiences may take any of four different forms, but PK only one. They follow closely but not exactly the distinction between waking and dreaming mental states. Two of the ESP forms, the intuitive and the hallucinatory, occur when the person is awake, and two occur as dreams. The PK form is not known to be limited by the mental state of the person. Each form represents a different process and therefore they must be presented separately.

Certain psi experiences are just like the intuitions of ordinary life except that their subject matter was apparently received (in Stage 1) by ESP. The characteristic of intuitive experience, both when ESP is involved and when it is not, is the sudden 'awareness' of the given item of information without any recognizable reason for knowing it and without mental imagery, as in the case reported by a woman in Michigan. During the Second World War, when she was in hospital after the birth of her child, a letter came saying that her husband in France had died of a heart attack. But she said, 'It wasn't a heart attack. He was poisoned.'

As she reported: 'I honestly did not know I was going to say it. It was as if someone else had said it for me. I insisted that they check with Washington. They did and I was right. He had been poisoned. I never knew why they first said it was a heart attack.'

The experience brought a complete item of information without a reason and without imagery. The person 'just knew' it. The case given earlier of the woman who rushed home when her husband was in danger also was apparently based on an intuition. But the information in that instance was not complete. She knew she must go home, but she did not know why. Instances of incomplete information in the intuitive form are frequent. The degree of incompleteness varies, many of the cases consisting only of a strong emotion, or a compulsion to action. It is as if the information is entirely suppressed, unable to cross the threshold of consciousness. But the accompanying emotion or tendency to act breaks through.

Probably over half of the intuitive experiences reported are incomplete to some degree. This, along with the absence of detail even in complete cases, means that the transfer of an idea from unconscious levels to the conscious one of the waking state is accomplished with some difficulty. However, the majority of intuitions carry a strong feeling of conviction that the information is true. The case of the woman who knew that her husband had been poisoned illustrates this.

Hallucinations are pseudo-perceptual impressions; they occur when no external objective stimulus is present to cause them. Usually they do not involve ESP, but when they do the experience brings information about a real situation. In these any sense modality may be involved but the auditory is reported most frequently. The human voice is perhaps the sound most often 'heard'.

Probably better known, even if actually reported more rarely than the auditory, are visual hallucinations. Many of them coincide with the death of the individual 'seen', the experience thus seeming to serve as a communication to report it. A typical case comes from a woman in Kansas, who said: 'At an early hour one morning my father sat up suddenly in bed. My mother asked, "What is the matter, Bob?" he replied, "Mother is dead." She tried to convince him it was a nightmare, but he said, "No, I was never wider awake. Mother was standing by the bed just looking at me. She was pale, her hair was down, she was dressed in a white gown. There was a large red spot on the right side of her neck. I know she's dead." Word came that she died from an aneurism at about the same time on the same date.'

Since the message in such hallucinatory experiences is not expressed directly as an idea but by sensory imagery, its meaning must be inferred. The result is that only about a third of them transmit a reasonably complete item of information. In fact, when the information is reasonably complete, it usually means that more than one sense modality was involved, as for instance in the case reported by a woman in Illinois. During the Second World War her family received a telegram from the War Department saying that her brother, a Marine, had been killed in action. With the family distressed she had gone into a separate room, when she heard the front door open, and went to see who had come in. She writes, 'I "saw" my brother coming up the stairs in his Marine uniform. He said, "Shirley, don't cry. I'm all right", and then when he got to the head of the stairs, he vanished.'

The next evening the family received a second telegram from the War Department, saying that a mistake had been made and her brother was alive and well. When he finally got home he did not know that he had been reported killed in action, but at the time he had been lost from his unit and knew his family would be so worried about him that in his mind he kept telling them he was all right. The experience thus may have been telepathic, although the vehicle of expression was hallucinatory, and used both the visual and auditory modalities.

A Spirit from the Dead

In an occasional report of hallucinatory experience, a concomitant intuition brings added information and thereby gives a hint of the origin of the hallucinatory effect. An example was reported by a woman in California. She had been divorced from her husband for some time when, as she says, one night 'I awakened around midnight in a cold sweat. I sensed I was not alone in the room. I felt a horrible suspense and I shivered as I stared straight ahead. Suddenly about six or eight feet directly in front of my bed I saw the darndest thing I'd ever seen and I was scared out of my wits. It was a greenish grey whitish foamy substance – and then I knew somehow it was the spirit of my husband. And yet how could it be, when he was alive and in New York?' The next morning she read a report in the paper that her ex-husband had drowned in the East River the night before. It happened about the time of her experience.

The point in this case is that she knew 'somehow'; in other words, she intuitively identified her husband in connection with what she saw, although it was not in the shape of a human being. The intuition and the hallucinatory image together expressed the idea of her husband's death, or were the vehicles by which the fact, accessible by ESP, was brought to consciousness.

Cases like this suggest that the intuition and the hallucinatory effect develop together at the start of Stage 2. For instance, a message in Stage 1 about the crisis of a family member might create, in Stage 2, an incipient intuitive idea, and along with it, in those individuals for whom a sensory pathway is easily stimulated, an auditory or visual impression of him. Then if the intuitive idea was repressed and did not cross the threshold of consciousness, the result would be a typical visual or auditory hallucination, and this would become the 'figment in consciousness', the only sign that an ESP impression was received in Stage 1. Thus the hallucinatory form may be an adjunct of the intuitive, and limited to those individuals for whom the internal activation of sensory centres is possible.

ESP Dreams

At least half of the spontaneous cases reported are dreams. They carry their meaning by imagery, and the development of this is the point of special interest. Of course, it is not the imagery of pseudo-sense experience as in hallucinations, but it is rather a dramatization of elements of memories of sense experience. The person usually recognizes this upon waking and does not believe, as in hallucinations, that his or her senses were involved.

On the basis of the kind of imagery used, two dream forms can be distinguished, the realistic and the unrealistic. The imagery of realistic psi dreams is detailed and true to the actuality on which presumably it is based. Details may be so profuse as to suggest that the imagery must have been made by a kind of photographic copying process. An example was given earlier in the case of the woman who dreamed of the location of the car. However, occasionally a dream of this kind is defective and does not completely disclose the item on which it is ostensibly centred. In such cases the nature of the defect shows that the mental process involved is not one of automatic copying after all, for it was possible to alter the meaning that presumably lay back of the imagery. The defects in different cases seem to have originated in different stages of the process. Some of them apparently came in the construction of the imagery, in others even before it, and in still others after the imagery had been made.

An instance in which the imagery was defective and did not reveal correctly the identity of the person involved was reported by a California woman. She dreamed that she was attending a funeral. In it she was impressed especially by the rays of the afternoon sun coming through the stained glass windows of the funeral parlour. She also noted many floral wreaths, not only banked around the casket but hung on the walls. (She had never actually seen this done before.) She went up to the casket and saw her mother in it. She was awakened then by a phone call telling her of a friend's accidental death. Later she attended his funeral which was held in the late afternoon. The sun and the wreaths were the same as in the dream. Only the corpse was different, and this fact shows that the copying was not automatic, but that changes could indeed be made in it.

Cases of the second kind, those in which the defect seems to have occurred even before the imagery was made, involve the scene 'selected' to convey the information. It may not be the proper one, as in the experience of a woman in Washington. She dreamed she answered the doorbell and a brother she had not seen for years was there. She saw the details of his clothing, a camel hair coat on his arm, the peculiar kind of suitcase he carried, and an especially serious look on his face as he walked in the door. Upon waking she wondered if it might have meant that her brother was intending to pay her a visit. Several days later her father passed away quite suddenly. Her brother came to her house and the dream scene was enacted, down to details of the suitcase and the camel hair coat. Now she knew the reason for the serious look on her brother's face, but the scene of the dream had given no hint of the real reason for the visit. It obviously had not been 'selected' to inform her of her father's death.

The third kind of defect, the one that occurs late in the process, involves the interpretation of the imagery. Even though the person himself has constructed it, in some deep unconscious level, that does not mean that he knows it on a higher (conscious) level. This is shown by instances in which this higher level interpretation is wrong. Such a dream was reported by a California woman. It was in the early stages of the First World War, when a man still needed his wife's consent to enlist in the army. This woman's husband wanted to enlist, but she had not consented because of their small children and the need for her husband's support. Very worried one night, she fell asleep, to dream that she saw her husband in a field crushed by a big heavy machine. She told him of it and said she thought it was a warning that if he went to war he would be killed. The next day a neighbour found her husband dead under his big tractor. He had gotten off it to take some trash from behind it. The gear slipped into reverse and the tractor ran over him. Although she had constructed the imagery of her dream, she did not interpret it correctly upon waking.

While incomplete realistic dreams do not occur very frequently (probably not more than one in ten of those reported is incomplete), the fact that they do occur shows that the person does not have to copy the reality, but can influence the message by changing the imagery, selecting the wrong scene, or misinterpreting the situation. In each instance the influence that leads to the defect seems to be personal. Even though the reasons vary from case to case, they appear in the main to be emotional. While they cannot be pinpointed exactly in material like this, they appear to include factors like hopes, fears, anxieties, memories and desires. In view of these possibilities, and since presumably all individuals who have dreams of this kind could so distort the pictured reality, it is rather surprising that a large percentage of these dreams present an essentially true and complete item of information, and so make this form a comparatively effective message-bearer.

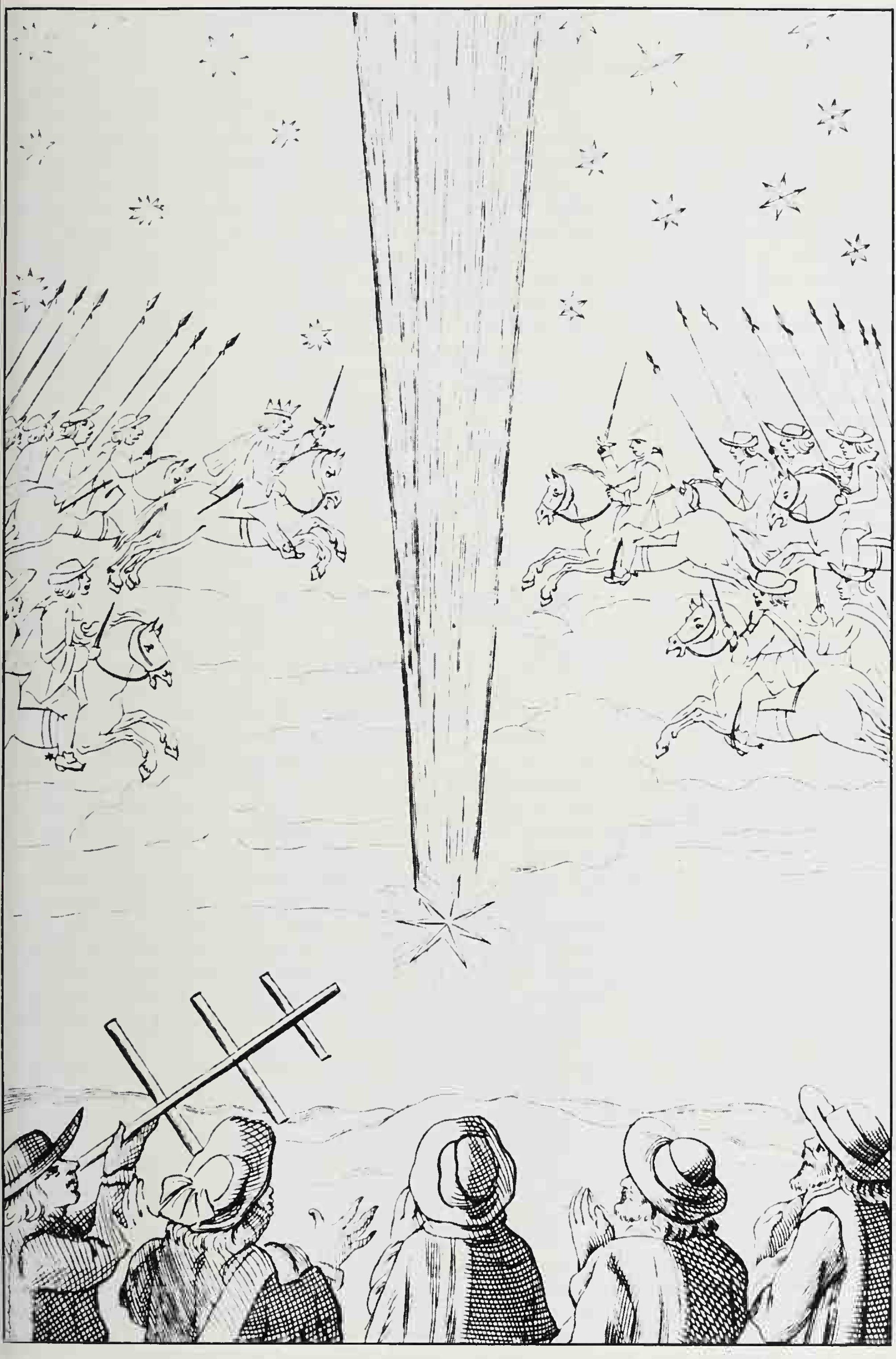
Hail and Farewell

Unrealistic dreams, as well as realistic ones, carry their meaning by detailed imagery but in these the details are not true, as can be illustrated by the dream of a woman in New York. She lived away from her parents' home at the time. Though her father was 79, he was in good health and she was not worried about him. But in this dream she thought she was at home and with the family sitting around the dining table. She, but none of the others, looked at her father. He rose from the table, smiled at her, pointed to his heart, turned, left the table still smiling and waved his hand at her as if in farewell. He said nothing, but she thought he meant that he was going to die because of a heart ailment. The dream troubled her. A few weeks later her father had a heart attack, his first, and died.

In this form, obviously the imagery is not a copying process based on the item of information secured in Stage 1 by ESP. Instead, at the beginning of Stage 2 a process of suggestion goes on first, and the result of it becomes the basis of the dream scene, as when the woman dreamed that her father waved goodbye to her from the family dinner table. Even though the elements of this fantasy were realistic in that they were true to memory, the scene itself was a dramatization. If the reality was the father's approaching death, it suggested the fictitious scene which then was embodied in the dream imagery. However, the meaning in this instance was fairly clear.

But incomplete cases are frequent, and again the defect may occur in a number of different ways. One fairly common one is that personalities are substituted in the imagery. A frequent substitution is that of the dreamer himself for the one actually involved. Such was the case of a woman who dreamed she was driving along a lonely stretch of road when suddenly a heavy black car loomed up ahead in the early morning light. A woman and child were in the front seat. The woman lost control of the car, swerved into the other lane and a head-on collision resulted. All three persons were thrown against a lone tree, and she 'saw' all of them, including herself, hanging as if dead from its limbs. The reality was that her brother Bill and his wife set out on an early morning trip. They were on a lonely highway with few trees when suddenly a heavy black car loomed up with a woman and child in the front seat. The woman lost control of her car and headed for Bill's. But just before he saw it his wife grabbed the wheel and jerked the car to one side where it came to a stop beside a lone tree. Although the woman's car swerved into Bill's lane, she got control of it in time and no one was hurt. The tendency toward fantasy introduced by the initial substitution of identity was plainly illustrated here by the striking embroidery that went on in the dream beyond the reality, although that had been reproduced fairly realistically.

In other cases the fantasy may be so remote from the actual situation that the latter may not be shown at all. The suggestion made by the actual situation takes off from it without embodying any recognizable detail of it. In 1948, when automobiles were scarce and expensive, a man in Los Angeles dreamed one night that a salesman was trying to sell him a two-toned grey Hudson. He tried to explain to the salesman that he



Harry Price Library

Collective hallucination, when several people experience the same apparently 'unreal' phenomena, has been suggested as a possible, if highly tentative, explanation of some strange cases reported in the past: from a broadsheet of 1681, describing a battle between two phantom armies in the sky

could not buy it, but the latter was insistent and the contract was eventually signed. The next morning the man's sister called to say that the night before at a charity ball she had drawn the lucky ticket and won a two-toned grey Hudson. She said her first thought was to call her brother.

Sometimes a dream is repeated under circumstances that make it appear to be symbolic. For instance, if a dream fantasy is recognized as being connected with a given situation, then a similar dream may precede a comparable situation if one occurs. A man in Minnesota had been convicted as an accessory to a serious crime. As the result of much pressure he pleaded guilty and was held for years without a hearing. His family worked for his parole, but each time when their efforts seemed about to succeed he would dream he saw his dead parents sadly turning their heads from side to side as if saying no, and each time the parole effort was unsuccessful. But finally he did secure a hearing and was freed. A few days before it he again saw his parents in a dream and they were smiling and giving every evidence of joy. He felt the appeal would be successful, and it was.

In cases like this the repetition of the precognitive dream appears to stamp it in. The first time it is fashioned on the event, and then it is repeated so that with some reason it comes to be taken as an indication of the coming event.

One feature of dreams like the preceding two is that the fantasy is obviously suggested by the person's own individual situation. It is not really symbolic, as it was in the case of a woman who dreamed for three nights of swirling muddy water. When ten days later her sister died of peritonitis after an appendectomy, the dreams were taken to have been 'signs' of it. This woman's grandmother, who died before she was born, was said also to have dreamed of muddy water as a sign of death, so that muddy water taken to mean a death had no doubt been mentioned in the family. It therefore could have been a natural association from which an apparently 'stylized' and impersonal symbol had developed.

However, when the fantasy has no personal connection the likelihood that it was based on ESP is questionable. Take for instance the kind of dream imagery reported by a man in Michigan, who said, 'When I dream of ice or snow I always have trouble on the job or am laid off. It has happened so many times that I can't ignore it.'

In such cases, if no time or other limit was set, the next 'trouble on the job' could be taken as a fulfilment of the dream without any necessary ESP impression at all. As a matter of fact, the unrealistic ESP dreams most frequently reported scarcely support the commonly held belief that dream imagery tends to be symbolic. In the first place the majority of unrealistic dreams that are reported do not show the impersonal imagery involved in symbolism, and many dreams that appear to be symbolic do not involve ESP.

Not quite all of the ESP experiences that feature imagery occur in sleep. Occasionally a person while awake may have an experience involving imagery (day-dream) which also brings information by ESP. Since the form is the same as that of a dream such experiences, whether realistic or unrealistic, can be classed as dreams even though the person was not sleeping.

All ESP experiences come in one or other of these forms – intuitive, hallucinatory, or realistic or unrealistic dreams – and bring items of information in varying degrees of completeness. The forms usually are fairly distinct from one another, although in occasional instances a tendency to change from one to another in the same dream may occur.

The Falling Picture

PK, the second main type of psi, is manifested by effects on objects without physical contact. They usually appear to bring messages, much as do the forms of ESP experience; as if the physical manifestation was a method of signalling a message without using the ESP channels. In them, instead of a hallucinated effect, a real objective one occurs. Such occurrences can thus be considered a fifth form of psi. While theoretically the information might concern a thing, a thought or a future event, just as in ESP experiences, it generally concerns another person, often one at a distance, and usually one who is undergoing a crisis at the time. The other person, the target person, almost invariably is one with whom the experiencing individual is emotionally involved. The physical effect then appears to the experiencing person to be a message or 'sign' of the crisis.

The crisis very frequently is that of dying, but sometimes the person is already dead, sometimes still living. There seems to be no connection between his or her state or condition and the specific kind of effect that marks the crisis. It may be different or the same from case to case, regardless of whether he or she is dying, dead, or still living.

One frequently noted effect is the falling of a picture at the time of the crisis of the target person. The following three cases, in which a picture fell and seemed to mark a crisis, illustrate similar effects related to different conditions of the target person.

The first case involved a death. (The timing in cases when the target person dies, however, is seldom sufficiently exact to make it possible to tell if the person was still living or already dead when the physical effect occurred.) It was reported by a college girl whose father frequently flew his own plane. She was accustomed to the idea and not worried about him, but one Sunday morning in her dormitory room she was lying on her bed, her roommate sitting by the closed window, both reading, when her father's picture fell off the desk. Both girls looked up in surprise for there had been no motion in the room to cause it. Before long the message came that her father's plane had crashed that morning and he had been killed. The accident occurred about the time the picture fell, and its falling was taken as a sign to the girl of her father's crisis.

The next example is of an experience involving a person already dead. It was reported by a woman in Argentina. She tells of her father's death after a serious heart illness. She was sleeping in the room with him when she was wakened by his loud breathing followed by silence. Uneasy, she arose and found him no longer breathing. It was half past three in the morning. She decided she would not wake her mother since there was nothing to be done at that hour, and it would be better to 'prepare her for the mournful news when she had wakened'. She dressed, went into an adjoining room, took down a medical book and was reading and thinking about her father when a loud noise from his room caused her to go back into it. She found that her grandfather's picture had fallen from the wall where it had hung for years. The wire had broken and it seemed to her more than a simple coincidence that it broke just then. She reflected that her father had been her grandfather's favourite son-in-law and she felt that this had been his signal of awareness of the death.

The third is an instance of a picture that fell when the target person, though in a crisis, did not die at the time. It was reported by a woman who was then in Budapest. She and her mother were in their apartment when 'spontaneously a big heavy picture jumped from the wall and dropped with a loud crash to the floor'. Soon a message came that her sister in Vienna had had a stroke, that the case was hopeless and that they should come immediately. The sister died soon after, but was living when the picture fell.

Regardless of the actual kind of effect observed, such an occurrence until recently was usually taken as a message from the target person, particularly in cases in which the target person was dying or dead. Instances in which he was still living were seldom taken into consideration, and probably, if noticed at all, were put down to 'coincidence'. The natural though unspoken assumption when the dying or dead were involved was that an unusual ability to affect objects at a distance must have been activated, an ability that living persons were not known to have.

The Experimenter Effect

However, since PK has been demonstrated in the laboratory to be a capacity that does belong to the living, the interpretation now is different. It now hinges on the question whether the messages did come from the target person, or were instead spontaneous PK effects produced by the persons in whose presence or vicinity they occurred. The question is whether the effects were produced by the target persons or by the experiencing persons.

This question of who is responsible for a PK effect comes up in the laboratory as well as in life-situations. If an individual subject produces evidence of PK when alone, he himself of course can be assumed to have caused it. But the exercise of PK, like that of ESP, is an unconscious process and can only be recognized by its end product. Therefore if a subject and an experimenter are both present in a PK test, both aware of the target and both eager to succeed, and do then succeed, it is not possible to decide with certainty which one is responsible.

The experimental results thus may not show which of two individuals involved in PK is the effective one. But they do show that living persons can exercise the PK effect. Whether or not the deceased can do so, or even whether they 'survive' death at all, are still unsettled questions. Further, in occasional cases the likelihood that the target person created the effect is ruled out entirely by the fact that he did not know (or perhaps, even know of) the experiencing person. These are mostly instances in which the target person is a public figure. Such a case was reported by a man in Colorado, who said that a clock in his home stopped on 22 November 1963, at the very time that President Kennedy was assassinated. It had run perfectly for years and he did not feel that it stopped at that precise time just by coincidence. The effect, of course, could not be ascribed to an influence from the target person. Instead some of those in the home who were shocked, as was the nation, must be supposed to have exercised PK, if indeed something other than coincidence was involved. But in all cases the experiencing person could have caused the effect. He could have done so regardless of the nature of the crisis of the target person or whether he was dying, dead, or still living.

The experiencing person thus appears to be the one who causes the physical effect. It would be, in a way, a sign to himself of the unconscious reception at Stage 1 of the item of information. There is reason to think that in Stage 2, the PK effect may occur in a way quite analogous to that of a hallucinatory effect; that is, in conjunction with an incipient intuition which is then usually blocked. The reason for thinking this is that here, too, in an occasional report, an intuitive component is recognizable. For instance the daughter of a coal miner, asleep in her home miles from that of her parents, was awakened by her light suddenly coming on. She says, 'I knew something was wrong down home', an intuitive idea, of course. It was correct, for at that time a motor down in the mine fell and crushed her father.

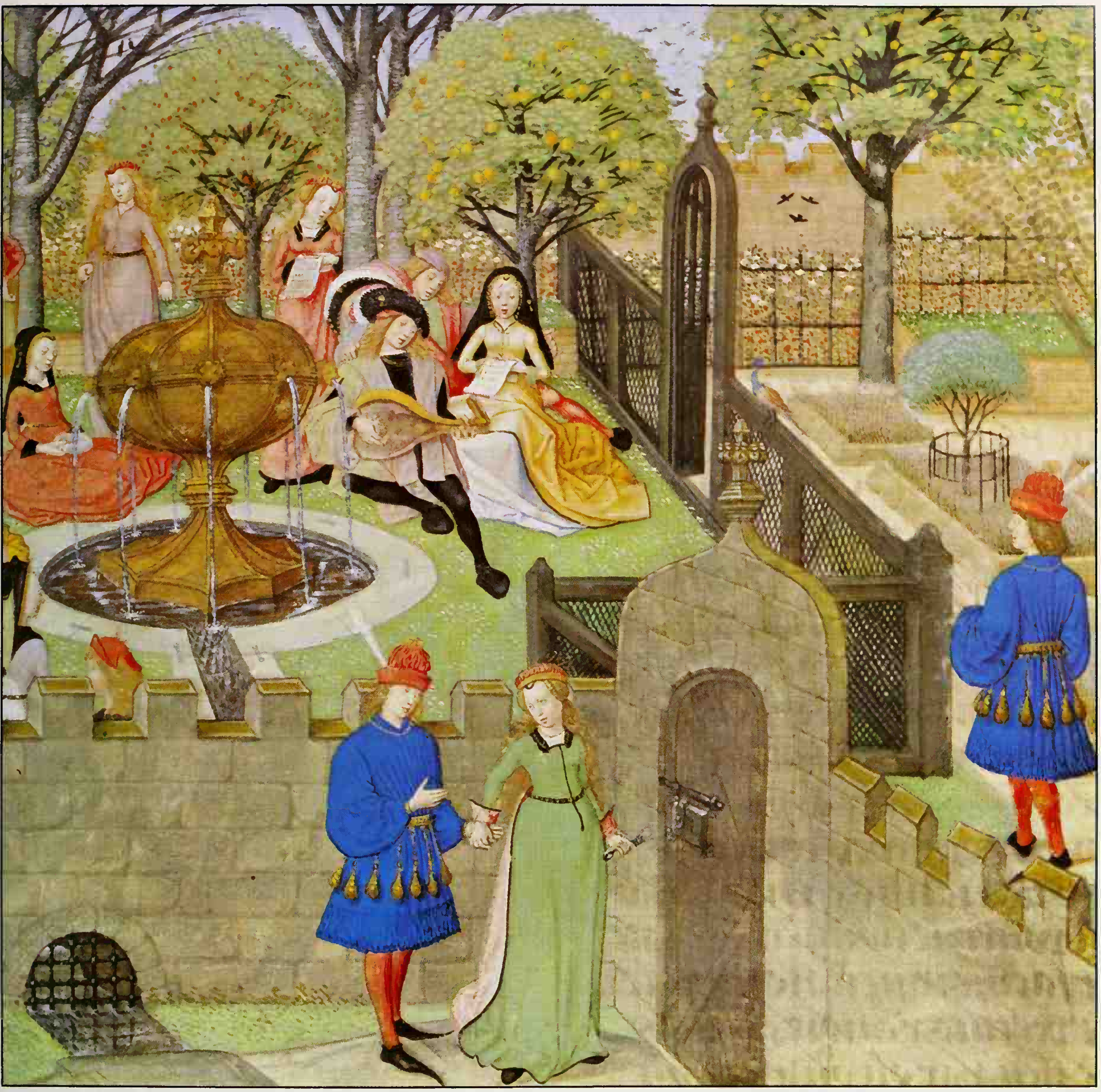
The physical effect in such cases thus appears to have originated with the intuition at the start of Stage 2. The origin of the PK form thus appears to be quite parallel with that of hallucinatory experiences.

The PK form never produces a complete item of information, and is also the form least frequently reported. This may mean that relatively few personalities can produce cases of spontaneous PK. It also may be partly because this is the most difficult form of all to identify with a degree of certainty. For not only must the effect be timed with the crisis but the absence of ordinary causes, too, must be established. These points often are difficult to make, for usually it is only some time afterwards that the details are noted. Consequently they are often unconvincing.

The general observation that follows from this catalogue of the forms of psychic experiences is that psi ability has no form that is exclusively its own, except that of PK. All of the other forms, and especially the intuitive and the dream forms, are common mental experiences that usually have nothing to do with psi. Hallucinations, while not so common, also occur in situations that have nothing to do with psi. They have been associated mostly with abnormal mental states; psi hallucinations, however, are not commonly associated with abnormality.

Since ESP does not have a characteristic form of its own, and the PK form occurs so obscurely that it is seldom recognized, psi is difficult to identify as such, and can be only tentatively recognized in everyday life by considering the meaning of the information transmitted. It must be such that it could not have been supplied by sense experience. Also it must be beyond reasonable explanation as a case of chance coincidence. Reliable identification of psi has therefore depended on experiments, in which sensory cues were ruled out by the conditions and in which the unlikelihood of coincidence could be estimated.

The classification of cases as to form thus indicates that they are not really a heterogeneous manifestation of a mysterious, and



British Museum

Dreams carry their meanings by imagery, not the imagery of pseudo-sense experiences as in hallucinations, but a dramatization of memories of sense experience. In the *Romance of the Rose* the hero dreams of his quest for love – the Rose: he finds the Rose in a beautiful garden but is driven away by Danger, Scandal and Shame; French miniature, 15th century

perhaps supernatural, order. Instead they appear to be the result of normal psychological processes, bringing parapsychologically received information to conscious attention.

Who Chooses the Message?

Even though psi experiences may bring information about a practically unlimited range of topics, the message in any particular case concerns only one specific topic. Obviously it is selected from all other thoughts, things or future events that might have concerned the person. But is it a topic that impresses itself upon the person from the outside, something like a telegram bringing an item of news? Or does he himself 'reach out' and pick this particular item from all the others, because of his interest in it? Indirectly, if not directly, it is possible now to get something of an answer to this question, both logically and by studying the range of topics involved in a large number of experiences.

Logically, the choice between the two alternatives is different now than in the past. Before the occurrence of precognition had been recognized, it seemed more likely that the person was the receiver of a message impressed upon or communicated to him from the outside, for all experiences under consideration then were contemporaneous with the time of the event. But now no such necessary temporal connection exists. Presumably an experience involving a future event could occur at any time beforehand, and besides that it would be difficult to think of a future event as being 'sent' to a person.

Earlier, another impression was also current, which was that psychic experiences nearly always concern crises of great importance to the person, and that they frequently involve communications from the dead. Both ideas implied that the psi message was at least urgent, if not that it actually induced a sensitive person to have an experience about it.

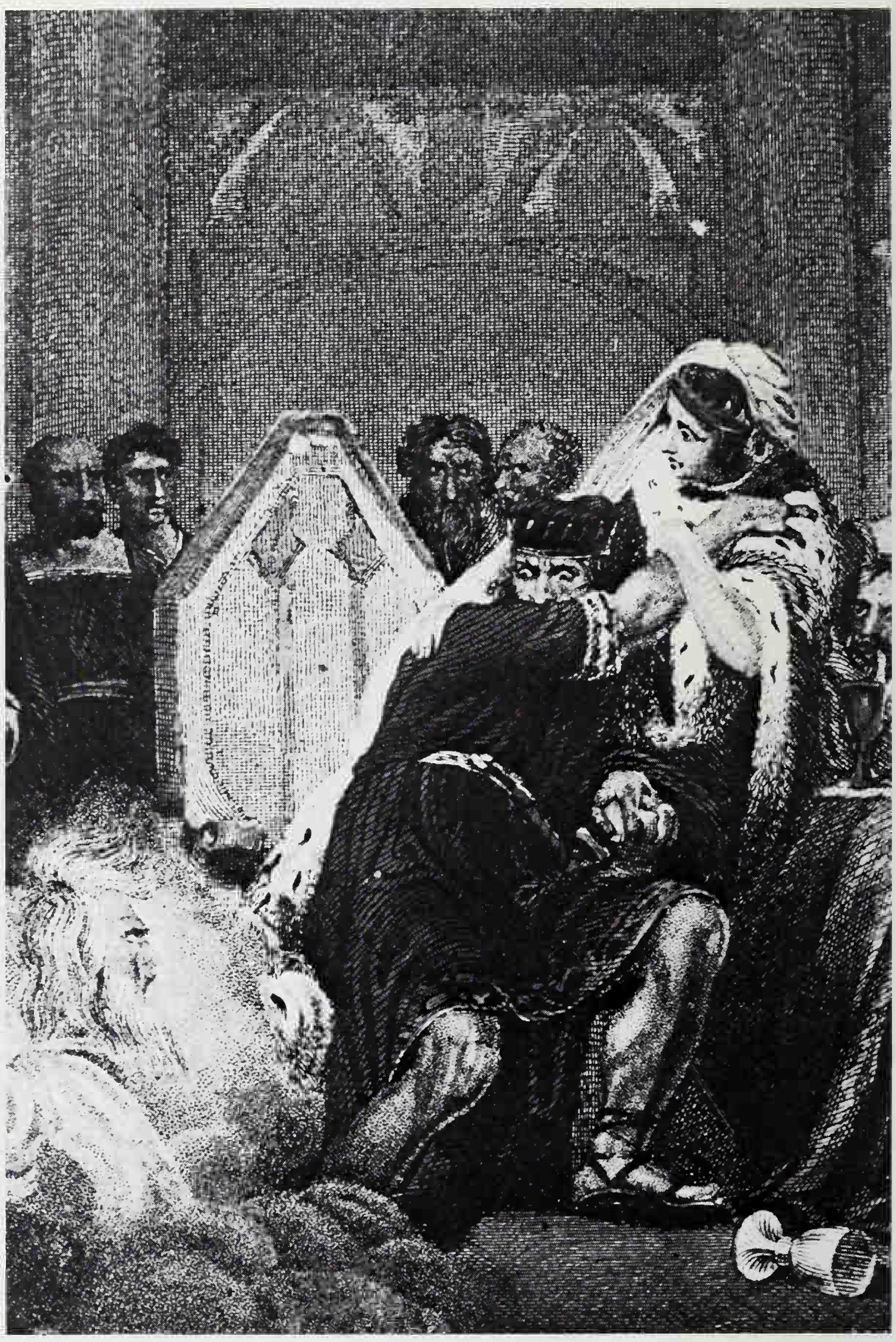
The impression of the usually critical nature of the topics of spontaneous psi was based in part on 19th-century studies in psychical research, in which special emphasis was put on crisis cases and those that involved the deceased. In the background of this work was interest in finding evidence that had a bearing on the survival question, and so there was naturally an emphasis on experiences involving crises.

But in addition to establishing the occurrence of precognition, research in parapsychology has shown that the psi process is essentially unitary; not only do ESP and PK seem to be aspects of the same process, but the types of ESP too are the result of a single process acting on different kinds of subject matter. Even telepathy, as shown above, is not dependent on outside initiative, but is a function of the experiencing person just as are the other types. This changes the likelihood that the event triggers the experience, rather than the experiencing person's interest in it.

Realistic Dreams Analysed

During the 1960s I made a special study of the subject matter of psi experiences. For this I turned to a collection of cases at the Parapsychology Laboratory of Duke University, and used the reports in it that came in the form of realistic dreams. About a third of them were contemporaneous (experience and event occurring at the same time) and the rest precognitive (experience occurring before the event). This particular form of experience was chosen because in it the detailed and accurate imagery makes the connection between the experience and the event it concerns more certain than in any other form. The distribution of topics in these dreams is fairly representative of reported psi experiences.

The study was made from the viewpoint of the experiencing person who in these cases, of course, was the one who had the dream. The objective was to see whether the topics of the cases, as far as the dreamer himself was concerned, seemed to be distributed as if they had been forced on him from the outside, as an inordinate number of crisis cases might suggest, or whether he seemed to have selected the topics himself.



Harry Price Library

Another way in which information known to the unconscious mind through ESP is sometimes transferred into the conscious mind is through a hallucination, seeing or hearing or otherwise sensing something which 'is not really there', as we say (though many hallucinations do not involve ESP): Banquo's ghost appears to Macbeth, though no one else can see it

Since emotional relationships seem obviously to be involved in many psi experiences, the study began by dividing the cases into groups according to the emotional involvement of the dreamer with the individual who seemed to be the main character in the dream. Four such groups in descending order of involvement were formed. The first included all dreams in which the dreamer himself was the person most concerned, and also instances in which no other person was primarily involved, but which were situations the dreamer would later experience. For example, a girl in Texas dreamed she was at an outdoor theatre and, looking to one side, she saw a man in a cowboy hat lift a whisky bottle to his lips and take a drink. A few nights later she was at an outdoor theatre, looked to one side and saw a man in a cowboy hat lift a whisky bottle to his lips and take a drink.

The group next most important to the dreamer was that of his immediate family; his parents, his children, husband or wife. The third group included his remote relatives, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, in-laws, neighbours, acquaintances and pets. The fourth was made up of strangers, people he had never met. In the case of public figures, he may have known of them.

Each of these four groups was then subdivided according to the importance of the subject matter, into crisis and non-crisis topics. Crisis cases involved death, serious accident, illness, operations, and weddings. The non-crisis cases were then further divided into two groups according to whether their topics were important or unimportant. The important topics included job incidents, honours, visits, journeys and contests. The unimportant were quite incidental experiences that seemed to have no particular purpose.

The percentage of the entire number of dreams which each subdivision represented was then found, as in the accompanying table. The results showed no inordinate pro-

Distribution of Subject Matter of 2878 Realistic Dreams

Relation to Dreamer	% of Crisis Cases	% of Non-Crisis Cases		Total %
		Important	Unimportant	
Self	7	17	9	33
Family	27	10	2	39
Distant Relatives	10	4	1	15
Strangers	6	4	3	13
Total %	50	35	15	100

portion of crisis cases, for only half of the total fell into that category, and many concerned trivial topics (15%). Besides, over a quarter of the dreams were either about distant relatives (15%) for whom the dreamer's emotional attachment was low, or strangers (13%) for whom it was practically non-existent. On none of these counts did it look as if the pressure or urgency of the event would have been the reason why it became the subject of the psi experience.

However, in the contrast between the distribution of cases involving the dreamer's self, and that of the other groups, especially that of the immediate family, a clue could be seen as to the basis of selection of the topics. The contrast begins in the difference in the percentage of crisis cases in these two groups, 7% in the first, 27% in the second. The 7% is very low, although it must be remembered that it is to some extent depressed because people can scarcely have experiences about their own crises in the present. These experiences are therefore practically all precognitive, while, in contrast, half of the crisis experiences involving the immediate family were contemporary. But the percentage of crisis cases of dreamers themselves is low also in comparison to the rest of their experiences. Their important but non-critical topics (17%) are more than twice as frequent as their crises. Even the unimportant cases (9%) are more frequent.

But the pattern is quite different in all of the groups other than those in which the dreamers themselves are concerned. In the immediate family group, not only is the percentage of crisis cases high (27%), but important non-critical topics are low in comparison (10%) and unimportant topics almost negligible (2%). Distributions in the last two groups, though less pronounced, are similar. In both, crisis cases are the most frequent, unimportant topics rare. In all three, the total frequencies reflect somewhat the degree of emotional attachment (39%, 15%, 13%), the percentages tapering off, although not disappearing entirely, when it is non-existent.

A great difference is thus shown between distributions when persons are dreaming about their own affairs and when they are dreaming about those of others, and especially those of the immediate family. This, of course, is the group with which their emotional links are strongest, the group for which their concern and anxiety presumably is the greatest. However, in the low-emotion groups, too, crisis cases still are more frequent than others, although in these the concern or anxiety would certainly not be so strong, and there would be only a general interest. But it could well be strong enough to be aroused by a death or other critical event, while it would leave the dreamer fairly oblivious to less important happenings.

From these results, it looks as if the topics, in a general overall way, are oriented from the viewpoint of the dreamers themselves. They do not appear to be random choices forced upon them. Instead they follow psychological rules recognizable in ordinary life, for the distribution of cases involving the dreamers themselves seems similar to the interests of normal healthy-minded persons. They do not dwell overlong on their own crises or worry about those sure to come sometime in the future. They are of course interested in many of their own important but non-critical affairs, but they also have frequent occasions when, as it were, their reflections are merely 'idling', when a myriad of inconsequential thoughts and episodes occupy their minds. The distribution of their psi experiences appears to reflect this same pattern.

But in real life the pattern is different when the emotionally close circle is involved and here, too, it is different. With that circle, crises are highly important. The smaller the items of their lives, the less is the inducement to follow them, whether by sense perception or ESP. In both, individuals must first of all live their own lives, and although in a sense they also live the lives of their children and other close relatives, they cannot follow them in detail as they do their own.

However, in the situation in areas in which the link of emotion is weak, here, as in the sensory world, a change in motivation comes in. The person does not lose all interest where stronger emotions cease, but it becomes less personal. It becomes the general kind that makes each person want to know something of the outside world even if beyond immediate contact, the kind of interest that makes him or her read the newspapers. And of course if anyone doubts the general interest there in crisis as against non-crisis topics, a glimpse of the headlines of almost any daily paper will remind them.

It seems, then, that the dreamers in the realistic dreams of this study were in general acting normally and in some way influencing or selecting the topics of their dream experiences. They selected them, not from some otherworldly idealized principle but according to inherent – one might almost say primitive – interests. The selecting, of course, was done on a deeply unconscious level, and consequently the principles that guided it were also unconscious ones, far removed from those that perhaps would be chosen if upper levels of mind were making the selections.

It looks as if the experiencing persons are themselves the measure of their ESP experiences, within the limits of their sensitivity to non-sensory targets. And with this picture of the topics that they select for their psi experiences, their horizons, which in earlier days were supposed to be limited closely to their own calamities, is much expanded. In their psi contacts, these persons appear to be more broad-minded, more citizens of the world, after the correction introduced by experimental parapsychology, than they would have considered, much less have known, themselves to be before it.

Psi Experiences and the Dead

Psi experiences in which someone dead appears to play an active part are infrequent in comparison to those in which no such personality is involved. They occur, but since all types of spontaneous ESP, and especially the precognitive, are now recognized, those that involve the deceased make up a very small part of the total number.

Reported cases that seem to involve the deceased are of two general kinds which are different superficially, though not in the basic psi process. One of these is the simple isolated kind, like those mentioned above; the other is more complicated and the phenomena tend to recur in much the same way for an indefinite time. The second category includes haunting and poltergeist phenomena.

Unrepeated experiences in which deceased persons appear to be involved take some of the same forms discussed in earlier sections. One of these is the dream. Dreams involving the deceased are usually realistic in details, but the appearance of someone dead in an active role in a dream of course cannot be considered to be realistic. Such dreams are therefore classified as unrealistic in form. An example was reported by a woman in Detroit. She said that, after her mother died, her father said she should have her mother's jewels; they lived in the same apartment and he kept them in his possession. Later he moved to another city and she supposed he took the jewels with him. After his death there, she did not find them among his belongings and she began to worry about them. One night in a dream her father appeared and told her she had worried enough, and she would find the jewels in the dresser in his old room. She should pull out a certain drawer and at the back she would find a small box built into the dresser, so that it could not be seen unless one knew where to look. She did as he said and found the jewels.

Even better known than dreams of the deceased are hallucinatory experiences involving them. (Hallucinatory, it should be recalled, is a term to denote that the person thought a sense, or senses, was involved when no objective reason was present.) A visual hallucinatory experience was reported by a woman in Connecticut. Her father had died some years before. She was awakened very early one morning. She heard nothing but saw her father standing at the foot of her bed. Somehow, though he did not speak, she got the command to go to her mother's home at once. She felt it was so urgent that she got up and within the hour had started on the trip home, a distance of over four hundred miles. She found her mother very ill and alone, and almost certain to have died without her daughter.

Even more frequent than visual hallucinations are auditory ones involving someone deceased. An example comes from a woman in South Dakota. Her father, on whom she had depended a great deal, had recently died, and she felt very much alone and helpless in the midst of many troubles. Her husband had long been ill and the family was badly in debt. They were behind in their car payments, and a man came one day to repossess the car. As she reports, 'While I was talking to the man at the front door, just as clear as my own voice, I heard my father say, "Tell him to wait till Friday." Without hesitation I told him to wait till Friday and I would pay him. He agreed and went on. Then I began to wonder how I could raise the $280 due. Thursday afternoon my father's lawyer called me and told me to come to his office and pick up a check for $417. The court had collected an old account owed to my father.'

PK effects that seem to relate to the deceased also occur. Such an experience was reported by a woman in New York. The occasion was a dinner party that she gave for five couples, all of whom had known a man who had suddenly died of a heart attack two days before, while on a trip to South America. When the wine was passed, the closest friend of the deceased rose and proposed the toast. She was holding her glass by the bowl, the stem broke off and fell to the floor. Her glass had not touched anything; she was just holding it. They all felt that their deceased friend was present.

No Evidence of Survival

These are the main forms of spontaneous cases in which the dead seem to play an active part – dreams, hallucinatory experiences and instances of PK. Of course, the question in all of them is whether the communications do actually come from discarnate personalities. Before the establishment of ESP and PK as abilities of living persons, it was necessary in the interpretation of such cases as evidence of survival to suppose that the deceased somehow had powers beyond those of living persons. And it was by these unusual powers that they could return and communicate with the living as they purported to do. But it is now known that, since living persons could themselves secure the needed information in ESP cases like the three cited above, any person or persons present could have been responsible for effects like the breaking of the wine glass during a moment of intensified emotion.

The imagery of dreams carries information secured by psi to levels of consciousness where memory of the dream can take over, and it is clear that the imagery itself is unconsciously constructed to fit the case. The hallucinatory forms and PK are also vehicles for the expression of information below the conscious level, and are forms in which information may be expressed when no deceased person is involved. Presumably, therefore, when a spirit agent appears as a character in the drama he could be another imaginary creation. The forms of the experiences in themselves can thus have no definitive significance for survival.

If spirit personalities exist after death and are in any way actually involved in these experiences, then detection of the fact would have to depend on evidence other than that the dead person appeared to play an active role in the drama of a psi experience. It would have to distinguish between influences ascribable to the deceased and those exerted by the living person.

Possibly such evidence might be found in any differences between the reasons or motives for communicating which the two persons, the living and the dead, might be presumed to have had. If the motive of the dead person in making the specific communication was evidently much stronger than that of the living, then the bearing of the case would at least give some weight to the idea that the deceased had influenced or caused the experience.

In the examples already given no great difference in motives exists, and it is rarely that a situation is such that the deceased person's interest in the communication can be presumed to have been much greater than that of the living person. One such, reported by a woman in Florida, happened when she was a girl in her 20s and travel was still mainly by train. In her Pullman one night she woke up, she said, 'to see the face of a nice man, probably in his late 50s, brown hair and eyes and a Van Dyke beard. He apologized, said his family was on the train and he was looking for them, and that I looked so much like his daughter that he thought he had found them. I went back to sleep resolved to waken early and try to get a look at the girl who looked like me. I did not find her until I was in the station. Then I saw her and with her were her mother and brother. The brother looked just like his father. Just then from the baggage car a coffin was taken off the train, and the girl, her mother and brother, in deep mourning and weeping followed with sad eyes the transfer of the coffin. I did not have the presence of mind to tell them of my experience, but I realized then that the buttons of my berth had not been opened and it was dark in it, yet that face and head had certainly been very visible.'

Clairvoyant Reading

In general, the senses (of certain people, at least) are sometimes capable of surprising feats of hyperacuity. In the 1880s, for instance, two Frenchmen, Bergson and Robinet, discovered a boy who, under hypnosis, appeared to be able to 'read' by clairvoyance book page numbers chosen at random by one of the experimenters. The conditions under which he could do this, however, were extremely specific: the experimenter had to stand with his back against the light, the book had to be held nearly vertical, about 4in. from the experimenter's eyes, but slightly below them so that he could look sometimes at the page and sometimes at the boy. It occurred to one of the experimenters that the boy might conceivably be reading the numbers from their reflection in the cornea of the reader. F. W. H. Myers, in reporting this case, calculated that the corneal image would have been about 1 mm. in height, while two people who carried out some experiments on reading similar letters in this way found they could only succeed when the letters were about 10mm high. This may seem to put the boy's performance beyond the bounds of (normal) possibility, but there is no knowing to what extent he was endowed with abnormal visual acuity, and, furthermore, it is possible that, whatever the boy's normal acuity may have been, it was enhanced under hypnosis.

Charles McCreery
Science, Philosophy and ESP

More Complicated Levels

In this instance, as in many of the cases when the emotional situation is strongly weighted toward the deceased, he was a stranger to the experiencing one. The latter had no apparent reason for making the contact implied in the psi experience, while the deceased one seemed to have a motive. But still the evidence is not conclusive.

It can be observed, however, that experiences in which the dead seem to play an active role, if considered as unconscious dramatizations, do involve more complicated levels of it than other unrealistic psi dreams usually do. In these not only do the deceased appear as self-activated characters, but they also deliver the message. This may mean that these appearances of the deceased are not purely dramatizations, but actual influences; or, on the other hand, it may mean that the unconscious dramatizing ability of very few dreamers is sufficient to produce this level of fantasy.

The situation regarding these experiences, therefore, is that they cannot be finally interpreted now that psi is known to be an ability that living persons possess. But at the same time that psi prevents an interpretation for or against the survival hypothesis, it does permit the question to be raised. If survival does occur, psi would be the necessary form by which communications from the deceased to the living would take place. But if it does occur, the methods of research by which the fact could be established have not yet been developed.

(See also DREAMS; GHOSTS; HAUNTED HOUSES; POLTERGEISTS; PSYCHOKINESIS.)

LOUISA E. RHINE

FURTHER READING: L. E. Rhine, *Hidden Channels of the Mind* (Sloane, Duell and Pearce, 1961), and *Mind Over Matter* (Macmillan, 1970); C. Greene & C. McCreery, *Apparitions* (State Mutual Books, 1977).

SPRING

John Moss

The renewal of life in spring has been celebrated since very early times and some pagan rites blended with the Christian festival of Easter: children dressed as angels, in an Easter procession in Brazil

The celebration of returning fertility, and its magical stimulation, is the basis of all spring rituals and festivals, from the Great Dionysia of the ancient Greeks to the Mardi Gras which is still an annual event in modern New Orleans

DRINKING, DANCING, FEASTING, noise-making and love-making have been the usual ways in which men have celebrated occasions of communal happiness; the winning of a war, for instance, or an election, the birth of a royal heir or the death of a tyrant. But ever since prehistoric times man has reserved special celebratory energies for the turning of the seasons, and has reacted with perhaps the strongest surge of emotion to spring, the time when the earth is freed from the shackles of winter.

This emotion was expressed in the form of religious rites, mainly because for ancient man no aspect of life could be kept apart from religion. Modern commentators have seen in the Paleolithic cave paintings of dancing figures in animal masks or disguises a form of hunting magic that itself was probably seasonal; but later ages brought agriculture to mankind, and the seasonal rites became of crucial importance. The celebration of returning fertility along with the magical stimulation of fertility form the basis for all ancient spring rituals and festivals, and so through them for most modern ones.

Something of their essence can be seen in the ancient spring customs of Mesopotamia in which the Babylonians performed ritual re-enactments of a Creation myth, reflecting the re-creation of spring. And they staged the sacred intercourse of the king and a priestess in a room set aside for the rite and decorated with leaves and flowers.

Sex and drama also occur in the rituals of the Greeks, a festive people who took every opportunity available for some sort of celebration. And the eastern cults that were introduced during later centuries offered many opportunities. Before that the early Greeks held a spring Festival of Flowers to

The sexual and dramatic aspects of springtime revelry sometimes overlap with another common motif in which the normal order of things is overturned

praise fertility and the god Dionysus (see DIONYSUS), with plenty of sacrificing, feasting and drinking. There was also some placation of the community's dead, the ancestral ghosts, a practice that found its way into many later traditions.

In March, the Great Dionysia was celebrated, which by the 6th century BC had come to be a time not only for general revels of a wildly unrestrained nature, but also for the presentation of drama in Athens. Evolved from older choric hymns and rites of Dionysus, the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides developed first, but comedy followed fast. And the latter retained explicit aspects of its fertility rite origins, as in the traditional flaunting of over-size phalluses.

Rome's spring festivals took up many of these older threads and entwined them with new ones. In early Republican days there were minor festivities such as the dancing and processions of the *Salii*, in March (see MARS), or the uninhibited merrymaking of the April *Parilia*, originally a shepherds' rite (see SHEEP). Also in April was a movable feast, the beautiful *Floralia*, which in the true primitive tradition combined vegetation magic and ritual sexuality.

The better known ceremonies of the *Lemuria* in May recall the Greek festival that paid homage to the dead: for the Romans it was also a time for laying restless ancestral spirits, and preventing them from wreaking harm. Something of the same intention functioned in another well-known late Roman festive occasion, the *Lupercalia*, which was held in February, at the very start of the Roman spring. It involved sacrifices, offerings of the first fruits of the previous harvest, and the other usual basic enjoyments. But it also required some ritual flagellation of people, most usually of barren women, to stimulate their fertility and perhaps to drive off whatever evil baulked that fertility. The priests also 'beat the bounds' of the communities, or of the fields, again to set up magical protection against evil for the year to come.

The declining Empire came to know many new cults and their festivals (apart from the novel worship of Christianity). One was the *Bacchanalia*, the frenzied Roman version of the Greek Dionysia, but another more austere festival developed with the cult worship of Attis (see CYBELE). This was the March celebration called *Hilaria*. It involved processions and sacrifices, followed by abstention from meat, and general restrictions, to accompany the ritual mourning of the god's death. The god's eventual resurrection was followed by ritual joy and festivity. Christians will find the pattern not unfamiliar.

First and Last Flings

From the earliest Christian times, the celebration of spring tended to begin on or shortly after Twelfth Night, but to come to a head especially in the few days before Ash Wednesday and the austerities of Lent. Many pre-Christian festivals were held at this time, and again this is an example of Christianity superimposing itself onto paganism. In fact, the folk festivals, as opposed to the liturgical ones, always tended towards the secular, not to say the profane. Nevertheless, the Church's terminology took over: the final day of the festivals is invariably Shrove Tuesday, presumably so called because it was a day for priests to shrive folk in preparation for Lent. Yet, although the festivals may appear to be in the nature of 'last flings' before Lenten asceticism, they were, and are, also 'first flings', expressing universal joy at the spring renewal. The pre-Lenten festivals were not the sole spring festivities, but for Christian Europe and the Americas, they were the first.

Some motifs are found in most of these early spring celebrations. Feasting is always important, especially for Christians who had to give up meat and any kind of rich delicacy in Lent; but sometimes the feasting is merely symbolized by the eating of some special Shrovetide food. Dancing invariably takes place, as always at times of communal joy; some special dances may be mimetic and dramatic, concerning some suitable springtime theme, while others might be processional, the ancestors of later parades. The modern idea of parades with great decorated 'floats' was foreshadowed in the Germanic rite praising the goddess Nerthus, which involved processions with sacred objects borne on a strange 'boat-on-wheels' called a ship-wagon or ship-cart.

Masks and costumes are always part of the festivities, perhaps recalling the prehistoric dancers in animal head-dresses, and the primitive belief that fearful masks provided a way of keeping evil spirits at bay. But in more modern times the costumes are worn largely for the sake of competitive splendour, and the masks have always helped the celebrants to shed their inhibitions in relative safety.

The motif of warding off or driving off evil crops up in many places in forms other than masking. Sometimes it is a magical ritual to protect the crops, at other times it appears as a magical destruction or exorcism of the demonic winter or some other appropriate symbol of evil. Noise plays a large part in the expulsion, as it does in many primitive rites; often an effigy figure is burned or suitably destroyed.

Mock battles of one kind or another occur frequently, and are probably linked with the motif of driving off evil. For while they may have taken on special colourations, such as re-enactments of historical combats, or riotous sport, their presence in a spring festival links them with more ancient ritual battles symbolizing the conflict of winter and summer.

Spring festivals all naturally incorporate some form of sexuality – not only private sex activity, which has always accompanied drinking, feasting and dancing, but also ritual sex that long antedates the Christian traditions. Some traditions incorporate variants of the sacred marriage; others merely bring in rude songs, the coarse antics of clowns, and earthy folk drama.

Drama, on any level, is a spring motif of its own. The incomparable Greek drama grew from much older, primitive rites; and the high traditions of English drama had their roots in choric liturgical rites of the Church at Easter which gave rise to later mystery and miracle plays, and the folk dances, mimes and mummery of the people, performed at Shrovetide, which developed the morality thread of the English tradition. Many lands still have special folk dramas and masques which are performed before Lent as they have been for centuries (see DANCE; DRAMA; MYSTERY PLAYS).

The sexual and dramatic aspects of the revelry sometimes overlap with another common motif, in which the normal order of things is overturned. Servants or fools become rulers, Lords of Misrule dominate the festivities of many countries, men dress as women.

It may seem odd that countries of the far

The celebration of fertility, and its magical stimulation, form the basis for spring rituals all over the world *Right* Fertility dance, in a village on the Ivory Coast *Below right* The maypole with its phallic symbolism is a traditional feature of springtime celebrations, and the custom of performing a dance around it is widespread: young men raising the maypole in Sweden

Uniphoto

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North start their festivities to celebrate spring and fertility at a time when the snow is usually no less deep than at Christmas. Similarly, it may seem strange that customs left over from Catholic observances of Lent still survive in primarily Protestant countries. The latter fact may be accounted for simply because the old ways die hard, especially when they are enjoyable, and the former may be because the combined pagan and Christian jollity, though perhaps imported to the northern lands, proved able to overcome even the frost and ice of February.

Indeed, a Finnish tradition makes use of the snow: outdoor games are part of the holiday, and old lore says that if the children's sleds can coast long distances on Shrove Tuesday, the year's crops will be bountiful. Elsewhere in Scandinavia, feasting, processions, games and dances are hallmarks of the pre-Lent time as is the custom of playful ritual flagellation with birch or willow switches, recalling the old purification theme, the driving off of winter and evil.

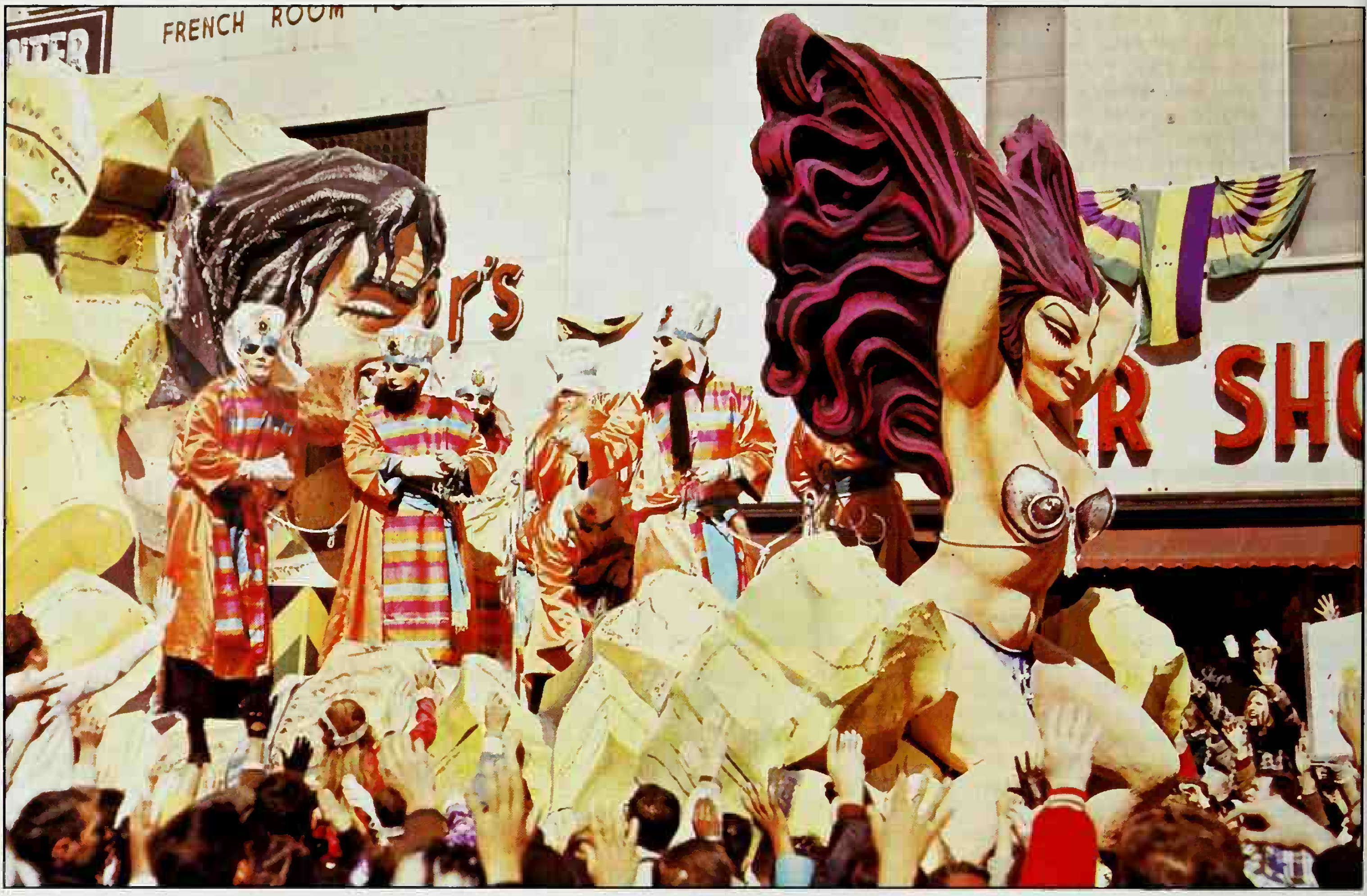
Driving off demons also seems all-important in Teutonic traditions, especially in the great *Fastnacht* celebrations of Germany, known as *Fasching* in Austria. The Austrian *Schemen*, a wild assortment of masked demonic dancers, which form the centrepiece of the Innsbruck festival the week before Ash Wednesday, are especially notable. Cologne's revelry features a Prince of Fastnacht with a court of fools, while Saxony was given to staging a mock battle between the forces of winter and summer. Munich's gorgeous pageantry is world-famous, but seems to dwell more on the city's medieval history than on folk custom or ancient rite; the German-speaking Swiss of Zurich have a tradition of killing an effigy of winter in their spring festivities.

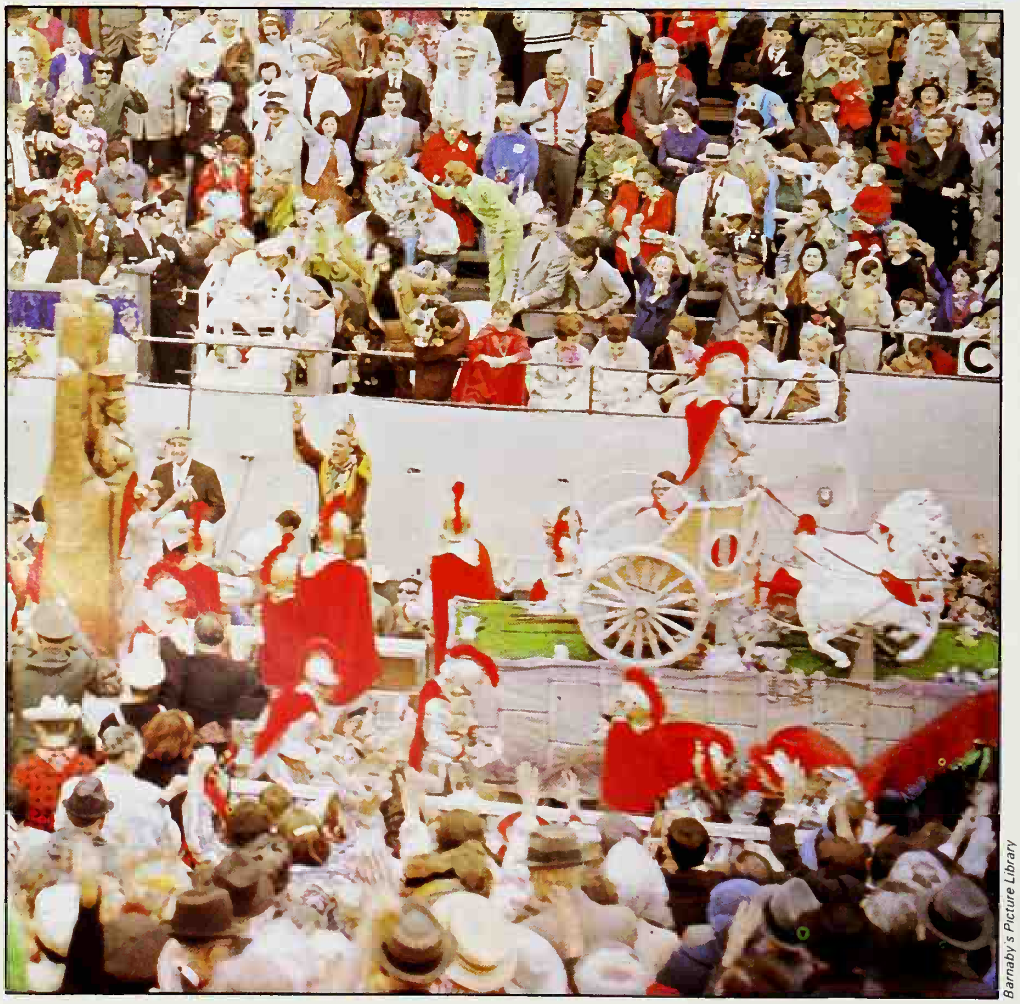
British customs generally seem to have missed out the parades and pageantry so favoured in other lands, but some of the old spring motifs make their appearance. Shrove Tuesday is still Pancake Day in Britain, symbolic of the coming abstention from meat. But apart from this special food, Shrovetide for Britons once meant a time for rough games and hooliganism. In the past apprentices were given a holiday on the Tuesday, and showed their appreciation by all kinds of happy rowdiness. A special sort of Shrovetide football was played in many towns and rural villages (see GAMES). The sexuality theme seems to be lacking in the British Shrovetide, though the traditional post-Easter fun, and especially the Maytime delights of the past, tended to make up for this lack (see MAY DAY).

In other countries pancakes are eaten as in Britain, and there are also splendid parades or dances. In Belgium where pancakes and door-to-door begging are both part of the tradition, glorious processions were staged. These were dominated by the Gilles, who wore beautiful costumes of silk embroidered with lace, and ostrich-plume head-dresses, and who used to pelt onlookers with oranges.

Old Russian and eastern European customs included eating special cakes: the Russians called them *blini*, and the time of celebration was known as *Maslenitza*, 'butter week'. Apparently the Soviet Union has retained some of these traditions – especially the blini – though stripped of any religious associations. However, it is unlikely that other Slavic customs have lasted; the eastern European dance where the women had to leap high, so that the crops would grow tall, for instance, or the Bulgarian processions with men, dressed as women, performing mimetic ploughing and sowing dances.

Farther south in Europe, terms meaning 'Shrovetide' are replaced by the word carnival, which has come to mean unrestrained festive gaiety. Italy sometimes begins its *carnevale* in mid-January or earlier, and keeps up the feasting and





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In Christian Europe, and later in North and South America, the first celebrations of spring were also in the nature of a 'last fling' before the strict fasting of Lent; the Shrovetide celebrations of Britain were paralleled further south by carnivals, times of unrestrained festivity *Above* and *Left* Scenes from the Mardi Gras held annually in New Orleans; brought to Louisiana by French settlers when the state was a colony of France, it has developed into a major tourist attraction *Above right* Masks are always part of the festivities, possibly recalling the primitive belief that they keep evil spirits at bay: masks for sale in Rio de Janeiro which is the scene of the most famous carnival in South America *Far right* Effigy used in celebrations held in May in Portugal

John Moss

Robert Estall

The spring fiesta in Spain includes many folk dramas on sacred marriage or Resurrection themes, and dramatic dance battles between Moors and Christians

dancing and pageantry until Shrove Tuesday. Venice crowns an overweight effigy, the spirit of fleshly indulgence, as King of Carnival and ritually burns him to bring in Ash Wednesday. Florence, among other centres, is noted for the delightful rudeness of traditional carnival songs.

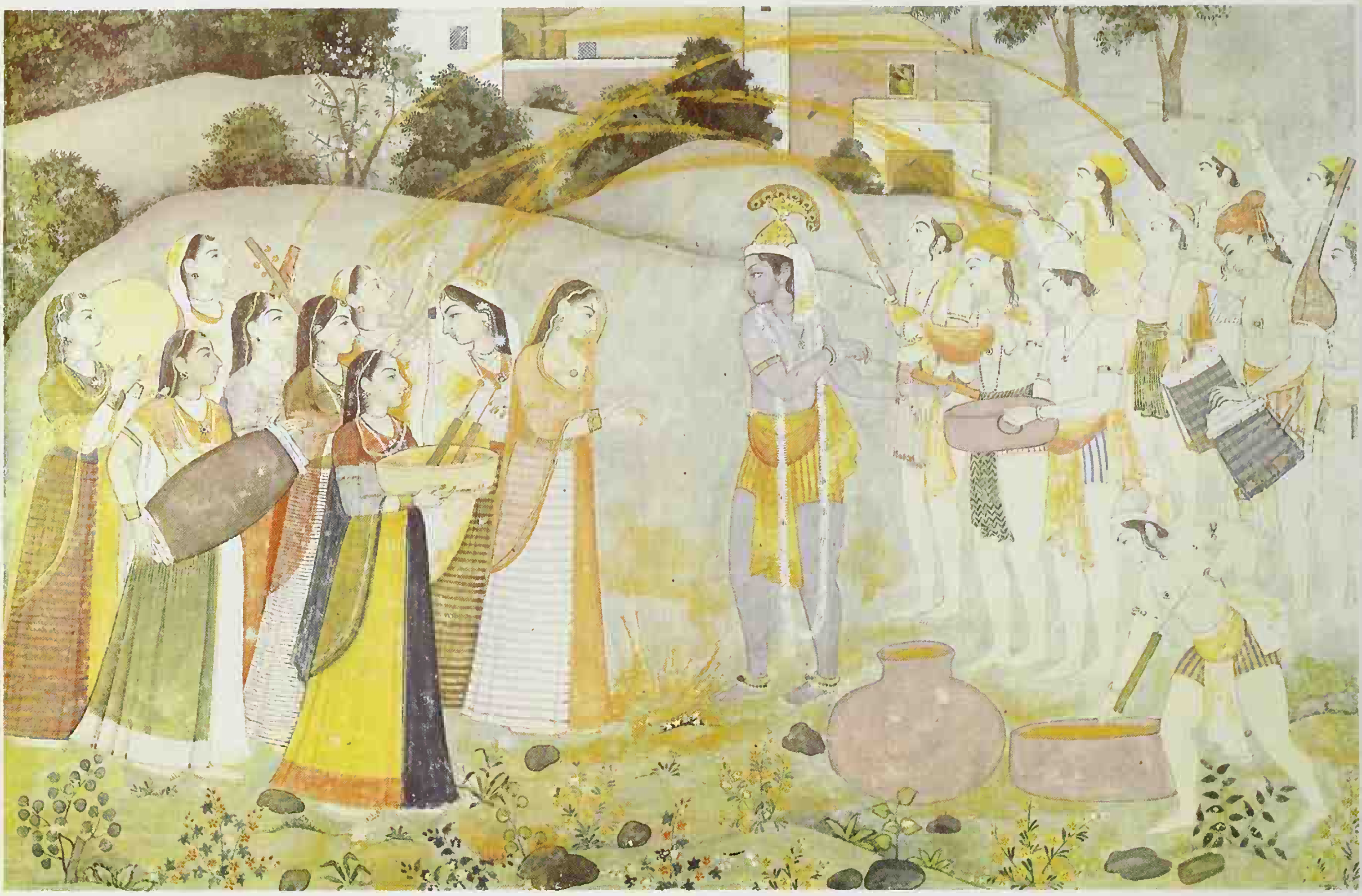
The Spanish carnival spirit produces most of the usual traditions, especially public dancing and masked processions. In northern Spain, a stuffed effigy again acts as the emblem of carnival licence; it rides in a cart decorated with greenery, reflecting the ancient belief in vegetation magic, and is duly burned. Elsewhere in Spain an effigy representing the King of Evil is ritually buried; and the spring *fiesta* also includes many folk dramas on sacred marriage or Resurrection themes, or on the symbolic battle theme, which is sometimes in the form of dramatic dance battles between Moors and Christians.

The Spanish concepts of pre-Lent fiesta were widely adopted in Latin and South America, and there too the motif of the mock battle seems to be strong. A Mexican drama ritually depicts the capture of a famous bandit by soldiers, while in south-east Mexico a mock battle dance concerns 'priests' and 'devils'. Throughout Latin America maskers represent devils and the dead, signifying the supernatural forces that are to be warded off.

But the Spanish ex-colonies take fiesta to its heights in their immense variety of special dances, such as the quadrille-type dance of central Mexico, for instance, in which participants wear medieval garb. Many of the dances incorporate elements of pre-Columbian Indian dances and rites. In Mexico, for instance, the time that is now carnival was once given to revelry in praise of the Aztec god of agriculture.

Portugal's carnival spirit rivals that of Spain. It was once especially famous for the extreme coarseness of the songs, dances and jokes of the masked Fools who dominated it, though this feature has diminished in recent times. The mock battle theme recurs abundantly: in the town of Loulé, for instance, the ritual conflict is fought out with flowers.

Portuguese carnival traditions were naturally exported to Brazil, where in 1840 the urban carnival of Rio de Janeiro began;



Victoria & Albert Museum

it is now regarded as the most lavish on the continent. All the expected features of carnival can be found in costly abundance, especially parades with vast resplendent floats and ornate costuming, in which various societies and clubs ruthlessly compete. Otherwise, besides the street dancing and music, noise and drinking and wild revelry, Rio finds some quiet corners to stage a major song contest, with rich prizes. And the whole festival culminates in a masquerade ball in the Municipal Theatre.

'Fat Tuesday'

The French have always enjoyed many different kinds of carnival, including a now extinct festival of butchers in Paris, which featured Le Boeuf Gras, a fattened ox decorated with ribbons, which was probably another emblem of the indulgence to be forsworn in Lent. But the chief festival is the carnival of Nice, with glorious parades and pageants, dominated by King Carnival and his court of clowns and harlequins, embodying the free wild spirit of the season. This spirit flourished especially in the French colony which is now the American state of Louisiana. There the significant French name for Shrove Tuesday took on new meaning as the general term for the whole festive time. The name is Mardi Gras, 'Fat Tuesday'.

Mardi Gras traditions date from the mid-18th century, in New Orleans, when private masquerade balls often exploded onto the streets to become public, sometimes violent, merrymaking. By the early 19th century the city's revellers had taken to parading through the streets on horseback or in carriages to display their finery; and tableaux, masques and similar light dramas had become a part of the occasion.

By the mid-19th century, the Creole domination of this essentially French tradition had begun to be eclipsed by the eager 'Saxons'. Then in 1857 a group of the latter formed a theoretically secret society called the 'Mystic Krewe of Comus', and staged a colourful street parade depicting the demons from Milton's *Paradise Lost*. So the modern Mardi Gras was born.

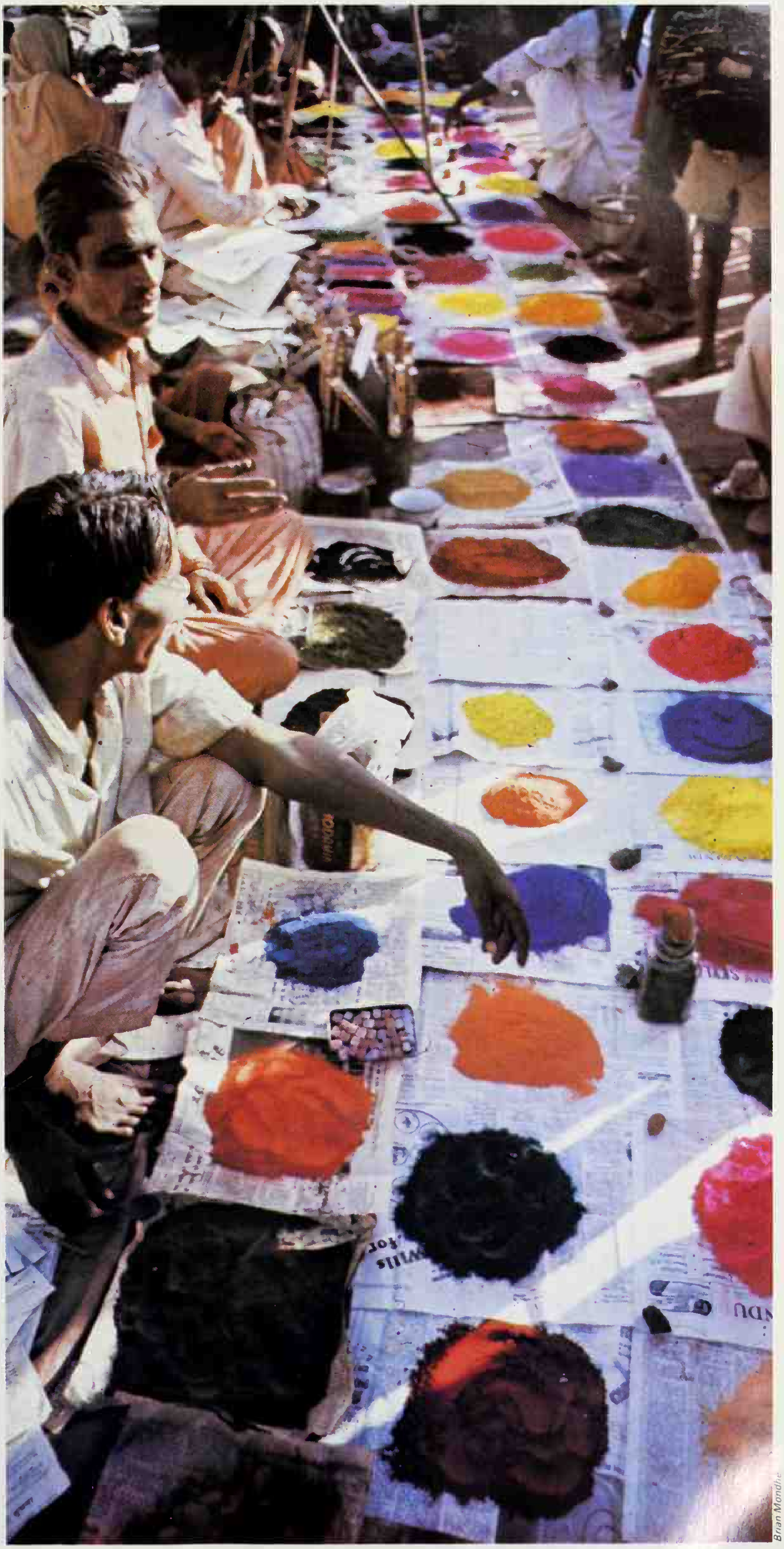
The Civil War interrupted the tradition but the Krewe of Comus formed itself again afterwards and continued its parades, always with a special theme that might be allegorical or sometimes satirical. There was always a torchlit night parade on the Tuesday. The Krewe also staged tableaux, and topped off the night with a grand ball that rapidly became a major social occasion.

The festivities were often marred by Creole-Saxon conflicts and general riotous behaviour, but the protests of some citizens could not stem the Mardi Gras tide. In 1872 the day was declared a legal holiday, though by then the festival had been getting under way much earlier. Indeed, in 1870 a Lord of Misrule figure had briefly appeared, with a parade of his own, on Twelfth Night. But in 1872 he faded out, for Rex, King of Carnival, and his court of Dukes, came into being partly to impress the Russian Tsar's younger son, who was visiting the city. The parades were enormous that year, the decorations lavish, the merriment frenzied. On the Tuesday more than a dozen bands played a song called *If Ever I Cease to Love*, supposedly a favourite of the royal Russian; and though he must have been heartily sick of it by the end of the day it remains a traditional tune of Mardi Gras. That year also there was a Boeuf Gras in the old French tradition. Rex, whose parade was at noon on the Tuesday, initiated the now fixed custom of acquiring a Queen, usually a pretty society debutante, and escorting her to the 'court' of Comus at midnight, to pay respects to the first lord of Mardi Gras.

Soon other krewes, as the clubs and societies are still generically known, began to take part. The Knights of Momus led the newcomers, and at first paraded on New Year's Eve, later switching to the Thursday before Fat Tuesday. In 1882 the Knights of Proteus began parading on the Monday; the Krewe of Hermes took over the Friday; and krewes of Orpheus, Osiris, Mithras, Elves of Oberon, the Harlequins, Pierettes, Marionettes and dozens of others found room where they could for their own parades and displays.

Some citizens thought it was all getting out of hand. Sometimes the festivities began before Christmas, as they still do: in 1965 the society balls began on 23 December and there had been 62 of them by Fat Tuesday. From the start, the inter-krewe rivalry had been lavishly expensive. But there was no stopping the flood. Neighbourhood parades began to spring up, smaller versions

Intended to promote fertility and reinvigorate the year, the *Holi* is celebrated in northern India when the crops of the spring harvest are almost ripe; festivities include ritual dramas in which women battle with the men, and generally culminate in a procession; on the second day dust and coloured water are flung over the spectators *Left* 18th century gouache, showing men of a village spraying red water over the women during the spring festival *Right* Dyes for use in the celebrations, for sale in an Indian market place



Brian Mondhe

of the great downtown processions, and on the Saturday schoolchildren organized their own parades. After the First World War the Negroes of New Orleans introduced a parade on the Tuesday itself, before Rex's parade began. The black contribution was headed by the Zulu King, with a ham-bone as sceptre, who was clearly in the Lord of Misrule tradition of overturning the usual order of things. He parades still, though black militants deplore his presence.

Others now tend to deplore the New Orleans' Mardi Gras as a whole, feeling that its French antecedents and the pre-Lent gaiety have been forced into a back seat by the more modern spirit of public relations. Mardi Gras remains still the high point of the social calendar, with an invitation to the Comus ball being a testimonial to social success; otherwise, the ruling theme is not snobbery but civic promotion and commercialism. The two may overlap, of course, for many of the krewes are somewhat identified with businessmen's lunch clubs.

Mardi Gras has been taken over by the promoters because it is a vastly successful tourist attraction. Though the carnival spirit of the citizens is supposed to be the mainspring of the festivities, the Chamber of Commerce is in fact a more likely one, and the city itself pours hundreds of thousands of dollars into the occasion. Nor are private promoters far behind: the trinkets traditionally thrown to the crowd from Rex's parade, once considered luck-bringing souvenirs, now carry advertising matter.

Once again, citizens are calling for the abandonment of the celebration because, they say, commercialism and violence have distorted the original 'folk-celebration' spirit of Mardi Gras. But it is doubtful if that folk spirit truly survived much past the 1850s. After all, the originators, with their self-conscious title of a Mystic Krewe, their high literary themes from Milton, and their expanding sense of their own social cachet, could hardly be said to have represented a spirit that had much to do with the simple, age-old human urge to celebrate the earth's renewal in spring.

DOUGLAS HILL

FURTHER READING: E. O. James, *Seasonal Feasts and Festivals* (Barnes and Noble, 1961); Errol Laborde, *Mardi Gras!* (Picayune Press, 1981).

Many holy wells were pagan sacred springs which were re-dedicated by Christian missionaries; some were prophetic, others therapeutic, and others again had power to work evil

SPRINGS AND WELLS

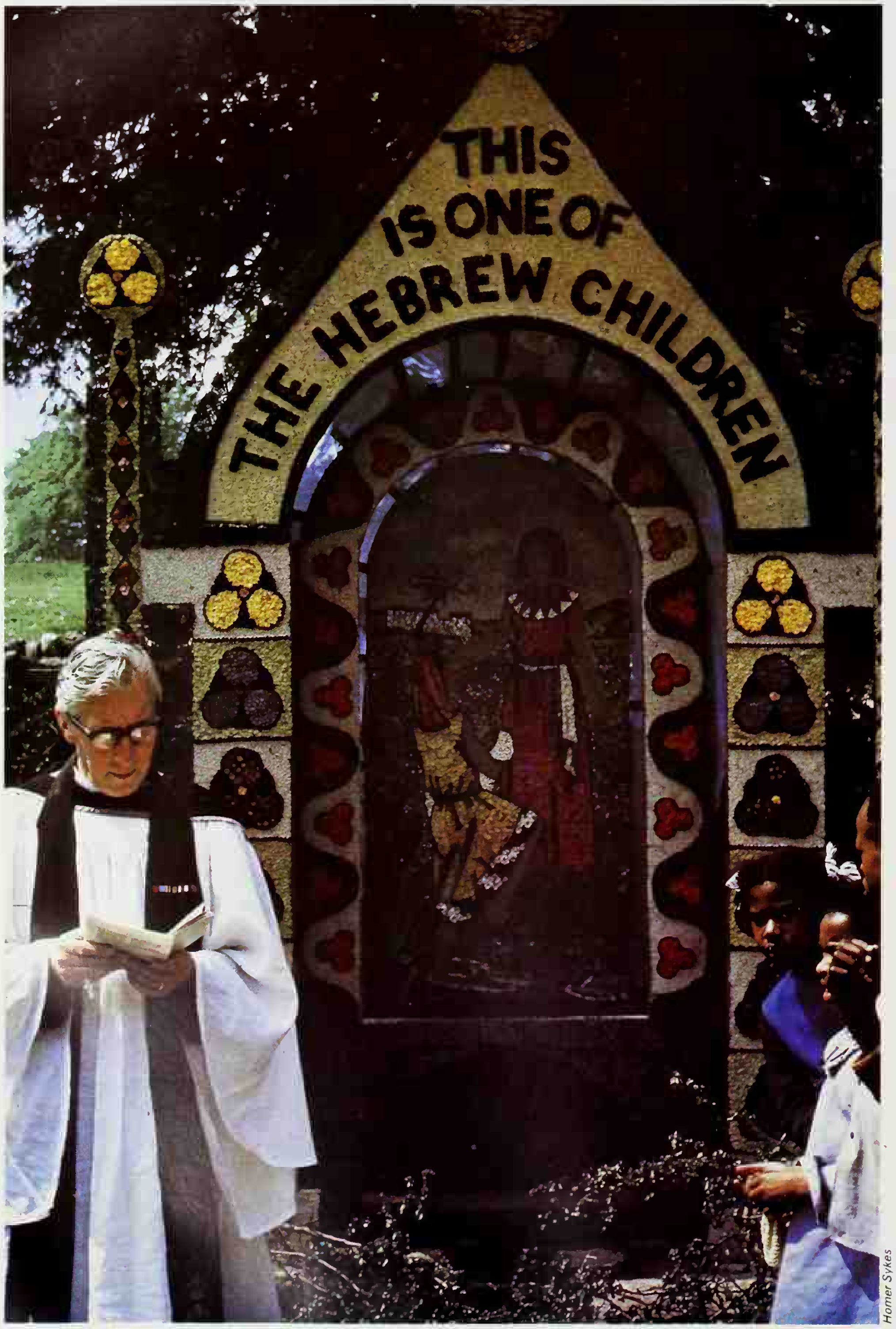
THE SACRED character of particular springs and wells, like that of many rivers, lakes and waterfalls (see WATER), is an exceedingly old tradition which has its roots in one of the most ancient and universal forms of worship. Water itself was considered to be essentially holy by primitive peoples because it was a basic necessity of life. It was also mysterious, as its movements were often unpredictable and beyond man's control, and it could destroy by drowning or by flood.

Where rivers flowed, or springs welled up out of the ground, or waterfalls thundered over rocks, there some divine force was felt to have its abode, and was worshipped in fear and hope by all who approached. To the unseen spirits who dwelt there, prayers and propitiatory sacrifices were offered, that their dangerous anger might be averted and the life-giving waters continue to flow. To them also, men came to be cured of their ills, or to seek answers to their problems, or to call down destruction upon their enemies. Such beliefs and practices were very deep-seated and, in one form or another, they managed to survive all the religious changes of many centuries, including the advent of Christianity. Even today, their traces are clearly visible in numerous legends of healing or wishing-wells, or life-demanding rivers, and in some wellside ceremonies.

Certain springs and streams were believed to have foreknowledge and, from time to time, to predict the future by sudden variations in level or colour, or the manner of their flow. The now-vanished Drumming Well at Oundle in Northamptonshire gave warning of coming changes in the state of the nation by sounds resembling the persistent beating of a drum. In his *Certainty of the World of Spirits* (1691), Richard Baxter, who heard it once during the Civil War, said that the noise continued for several days together, and was clearly audible some distance away. St Helen's Well at Rushton Spencer in Staffordshire dried up before any calamity, even in the wettest seasons. Tradition says it did so before the outbreak of the Civil War, before the execution of Charles I, and at the beginning of the Popish Plot terror in 1679. Other springs, normally dormant, foretold misfortune by suddenly breaking out and flowing very freely for a short time. One such is the intermittent Assenden Spring, in Oxfordshire, which traditionally runs before a war, and is said to have done so in 1914, and again in 1939. The uncertain land-springs found in chalk country, which appear only occasionally and are known as levants, or corn-springs, were believed to predict by their sudden uprising a dearth of corn, and consequently its high price.

Prophetic waters of this kind seem to have concerned themselves only with matters of national importance or, at least, with coming events likely to affect a fairly wide area. There were other springs which had knowledge of a different kind, and to which inquiries of a more personal character were often directed. The famous Holy Well of Gulval, in Cornwall, used to be visited by people anxious about the welfare of absent friends. Kneeling by the well, and looking into it so that they could see their faces reflected in its depths, they put their questions to an old woman who acted as guardian of the spring, and the water replied. If the friend was well, it bubbled up as if it were boiling, if he was ill, it became muddy and discoloured. If he was already dead, it remained unchanged.

Many ancient holy or healing wells now associated with particular saints started life as pagan sacred springs, and were re-dedicated and given a new spiritual significance by the Christian missionaries of the early conversion period. It was the wise policy of the Church at that time to transform and purify, rather than destroy, whatever was innocent and harmless in the older



Homer Sykes

Found in parts of Derbyshire, the Christian custom of well-dressing is a survival of the pagan belief that each well had its own guardian who had to be propitiated every year if the crops were to grow. Ceremonies usually take place on Ascension Day, immediately following the three days on which God's blessing is asked for the crops *Left* Ceremonial blessing of the Yew Tree Well at Tissingdon in Derbyshire *Facing page* Plaques depicting Cain and Abel, and illustrating a text from the book of Isaiah

faith and, by consecrating familiar sanctuaries anew to the service of Christ, to make the transition from paganism to Christianity easier. This is why the first small churches were often built inside or near stone circles, or close to heathen holy springs, and the water of the latter was used for the baptism of converts. The little wooden chapel that was the humble predecessor of York Minster was built over one such spring, which still exists in the crypt of the present cathedral. The healing virtues of medicinal wells were no longer attributed to the power of pagan indwelling spirits, but to the intercession of saints in whose honour the wells had been re-named; and as new legends replaced the old, their very existence was often thought to be due to the prayers of holy men or, occasionally, to the blood of martyrs shed at that place.

Tradition says that St Augustine's Well at Cerne, in Dorset, came into being when that great missionary, finding himself astray and thirsty in a dry countryside, struck the ground with his staff. Another version of the tale says that he performed this kindly miracle when certain shepherds complained that they lacked water for their flocks. At Binsey, near Oxford, a healing well, into which coins are still dropped by people seeking relief from eye ailments, was called up by the prayers of St Frideswide.

The famous medicinal well at Holywell, in Wales, had its legendary origin in the 7th century, when St Winifrid was murdered in what was then a waterless valley. Because she repulsed his advances, Caradoc of Hawarden killed her by cutting off her head with a single stroke of his sword. Where the head fell, a strong spring burst out of the stony soil, and has run unfailingly ever since. A further legend relates that St Beuno reunited the severed head to the body and restored her to life, and that she lived to meet a second death long afterwards.

Wells dedicated to St Anne exist in many parts of Europe. In England they are often known as granny-wells because, being the mother of the Virgin Mary, she was the grandmother of Christ. A Breton legend says that, in her old age, she made her home in Brittany, and there, just before she died, Christ came to visit her. At her request, in order to help the sick people of the province, he struck the ground three times with his staff, and so called into being the spring of St Anne-de-la-Palue. St Anne's Well at Buxton in Derbyshire has no such personal legend attached to it, but there is a tradition that it is dedicated to her because, in the Middle Ages, a statue representing her was found in its depths. A figure of the saint, enshrined in a wellside chapel, certainly existed in Henry VIII's reign, for it was removed then and subsequently destroyed, but whether this was the one so curiously discovered is now uncertain. Nor can we be sure that the original image was in fact one of St Anne, or any other Christian saint. The spring was venerated in Roman times, and perhaps earlier, and the statue may quite possibly have been that of some pagan water nymph or goddess. It need hardly be said that no such idea crossed the minds of the countless pilgrims who came to the spring to be cured of their ills, and deposited their offerings in the chapel of the saint by whose intercession they had been healed. In 1538 the well was arbitrarily closed by one of Thomas Cromwell's agents, 'for that,' as he said in his report, 'there should be no more idolatry and superstition there used'. Some 30 years later, by a curious turn of fortune, it was once again a centre of healing, though not for religious reasons. It became one of the main medicinal wells of the then newly-founded spa at Buxton, and as such it endures to this day.

A Source of Evil

In some holy wells that were once pagan springs, the ancient indwellers seem never to have been altogether forgotten, or perhaps they raised their hoary heads again as the saints who replaced them gradually lost their influence on everyday life. St Nun's (or Nonna's) spring at Pelynt in Cornwall is sometimes called the Piskies' Well, and pins used to be thrown into it to gain the goodwill of the pixies, rather than that of St Nun, the mother of St David. Its water was used for baptisms in the parish church, but according to a story collected in the late 19th century, it was the fairies who were blamed for the misfortunes that befell a farmer after he had rashly tried to steal its granite basin.

When St Aelian in the 6th century prayed for water and so called up the Denbighshire spring named after him, he can hardly have imagined that it would become notorious,

CAIN and ABEL
1969

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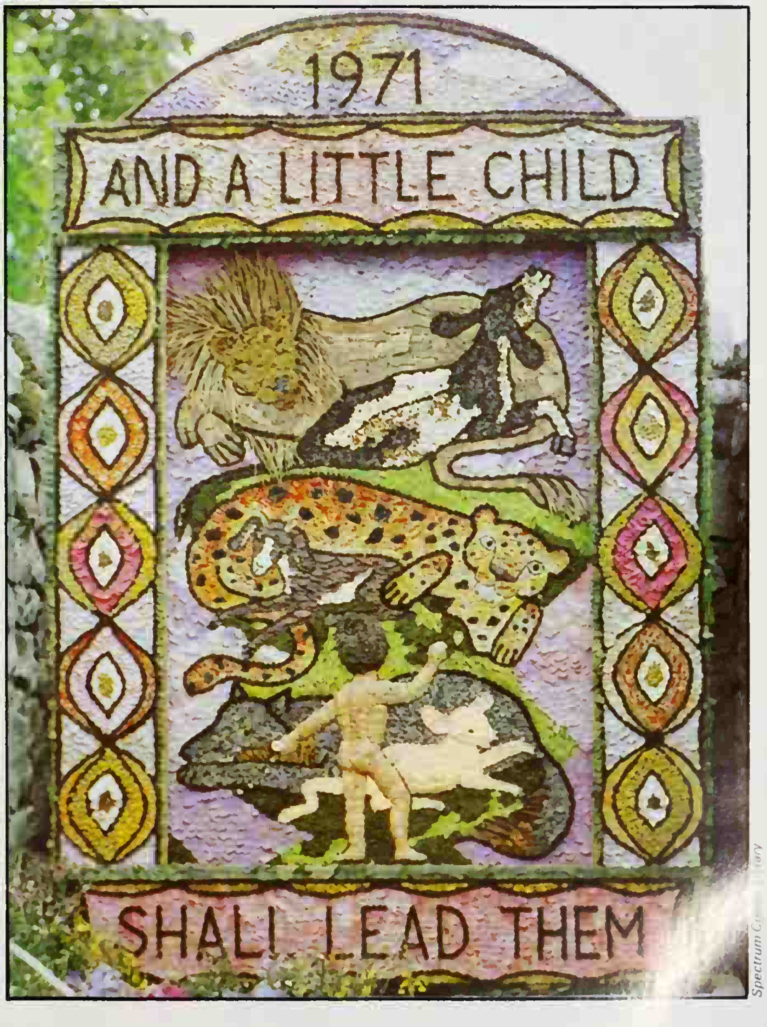

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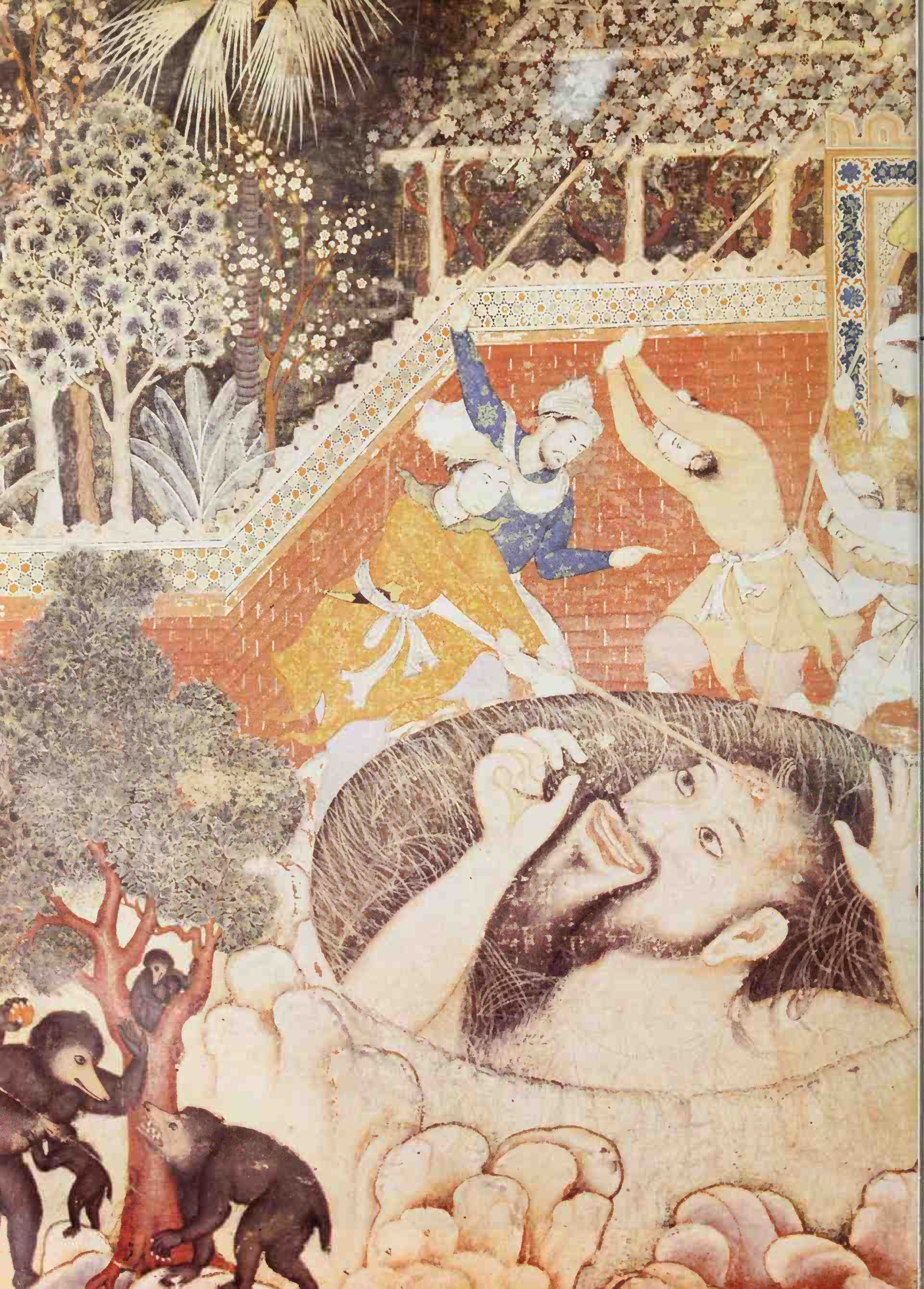


Because of their mysterious nature, wells are sometimes depicted in legends as being suitable refuges for malevolent beings; in the Persian *Romance of Amir Hamza,* the giant Zamurrad is lured into a well, and beaten by gardeners: 16th century Mogul miniature

and universally dreaded, as a cursing-well. It seems at one time to have been a simple healing spring, like many others, but during the 18th and 19th centuries, it had an extremely evil reputation. People came to it to curse their enemies. They gave money to its guardian, who wrote the victim's name in a book. His initials were then scratched on a slate, or inscribed upon parchment, and thrown into the well. A pin was also thrown in, and some passages from the Bible were read aloud. The seeker was then given water to drink, and some was thrown over his head, while he stated the nature of the evil he wished to inflict. It was widely believed that any person so cursed would become very ill, or would meet with constant misfortune, or that he would die. Exactly how these malevolent powers became attached to this spring is unknown; the well has now been filled up (see also CURSE).

Some venerable holy wells, to which pious Christians once came in true faith and devotion, have degenerated into simple wishing-wells, where secretly-formed wishes have taken the place of prayers, and pins or coins, or occasionally small pebbles, are dropped in. Those who visit such springs today are not actuated by religious motives, and probably they have only a very vague notion of who or what it is they expect to grant their wishes. Yet it can hardly be doubted that this is a curious reversion to heathen beliefs, unrecognized though they may be by those who offer their pins or coins. The wheel has come full cycle, and the pagan spirit, which some saint displaced for a time, has come into his own again.

CHRISTINA HOLE

FURTHER READING: R. C. Hope, *Legendary Lore of the Holy Wells of England* (Gale, 1968, c1893); P. Logan, *The Holy Wells of Ireland* (Collins Sons, 1981); R. Masani, *Folklore of Wells* (Folcroft, 1977, c1918).

STAG

ANIMALS WITH HORNS or antlers are depicted in paintings and carvings executed by men of the Old Stone Age; and the 'Horned Sorcerer', a painting of a man wearing antlers, in the cave of Les Trois Frères in southern France, suggests that such beasts were of ritual importance (see ICONOGRAPHY). Among the Hittites a god whose sacred animal was the stag was worshipped. His cult, which dates back to the third millennium BC, was widespread, and models of stags have been recovered from tombs. A god of the countryside, he is represented standing on a stag, holding a falcon and a hare, and it is possible that, before the Hittite city states arose, he may have presided over the chase.

The Celtic divinity Cernunnos was depicted wearing antlers and, usually, in a squatting posture, as on the Gundestrup cauldron found in Jutland, where he is shown surrounded by animals and may have been regarded as a Lord of Beasts. A rock carving in Val Canonica in northern Italy shows a phallic figure apparently worshipping before a horned god who wears a torque (metal ornament). The god was probably regarded as a source of fertility and power. Evidence from the Near East indicates that horns represented supernatural power (see HORNS).

At Syracuse in Sicily women singers wore garlands, and antlers on their heads, and at a festival in honour of Artemis men were similarly adorned. In another such ritual men postured like women. There was yet another ceremony in which men wore phalluses, and one in which women wore imitations of the male organ. There were evidently ambivalent ideas concerning Artemis, the huntress goddess, who was represented in art with one or more stags. Animals, and even human beings, were sacrificed to her. Actaeon, the young hunter who inadvertently interrupted her bathing, was transformed into a stag and torn to pieces by his own hounds (see DIANA).

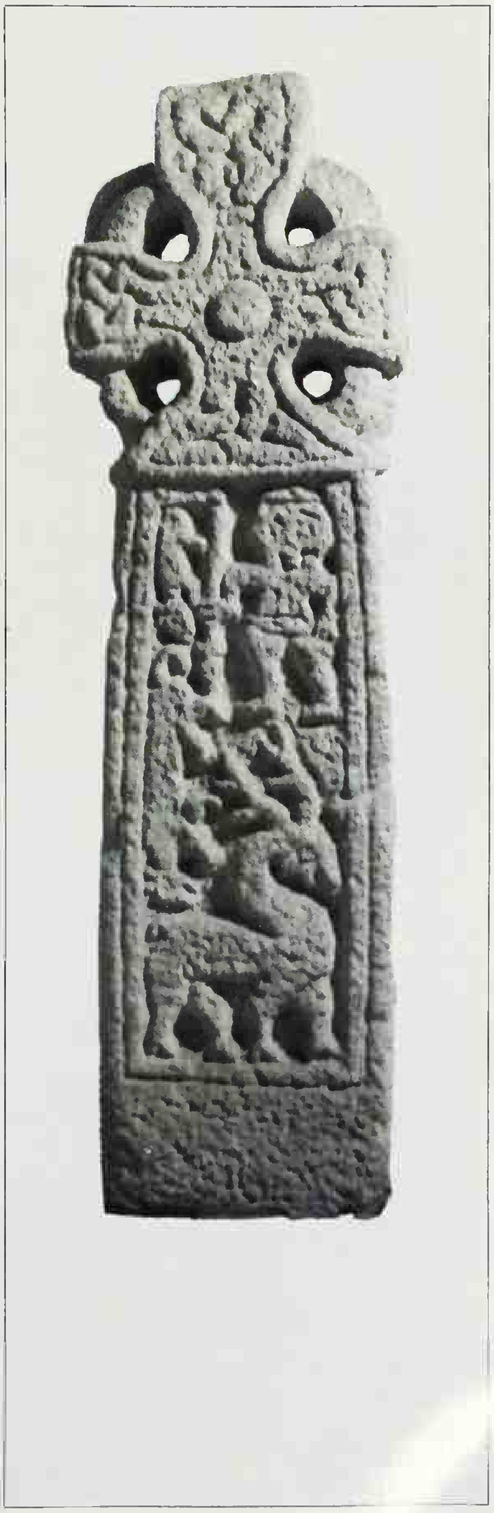
There is a curious connection between the stag and precious metals. The hinds captured by Artemis and harnessed to her golden chariot bore horns. Hercules's third labour involved capturing the Ceryneian hind which had brazen hooves and golden horns, and which was sacred to Artemis, and bringing it to Mycene (see HERCULES). The *Rama Yana*, an Indian epic, mentions a golden-antlered stag whose coat was flecked with silver, and in China deer are associated with places where precious metals are mined. Silver models of deer were placed in Christian sanctuaries because the stag was regarded as a symbol of Christ; when confronted with a serpent it represented the Christian overcoming evil.

A ritual stag-hunt took place on Mt Lycaeum at the beginning of the Christian era, and as late as the 5th century AD stag mummers danced in the south of France. In North America deer dances were performed by antlered dancers to increase fertility by causing rain to fall, and to encourage the growth of wild crops. Men wearing antlers still perform a dance in September every year at Abbots Bromley in Staffordshire.

Deer Women

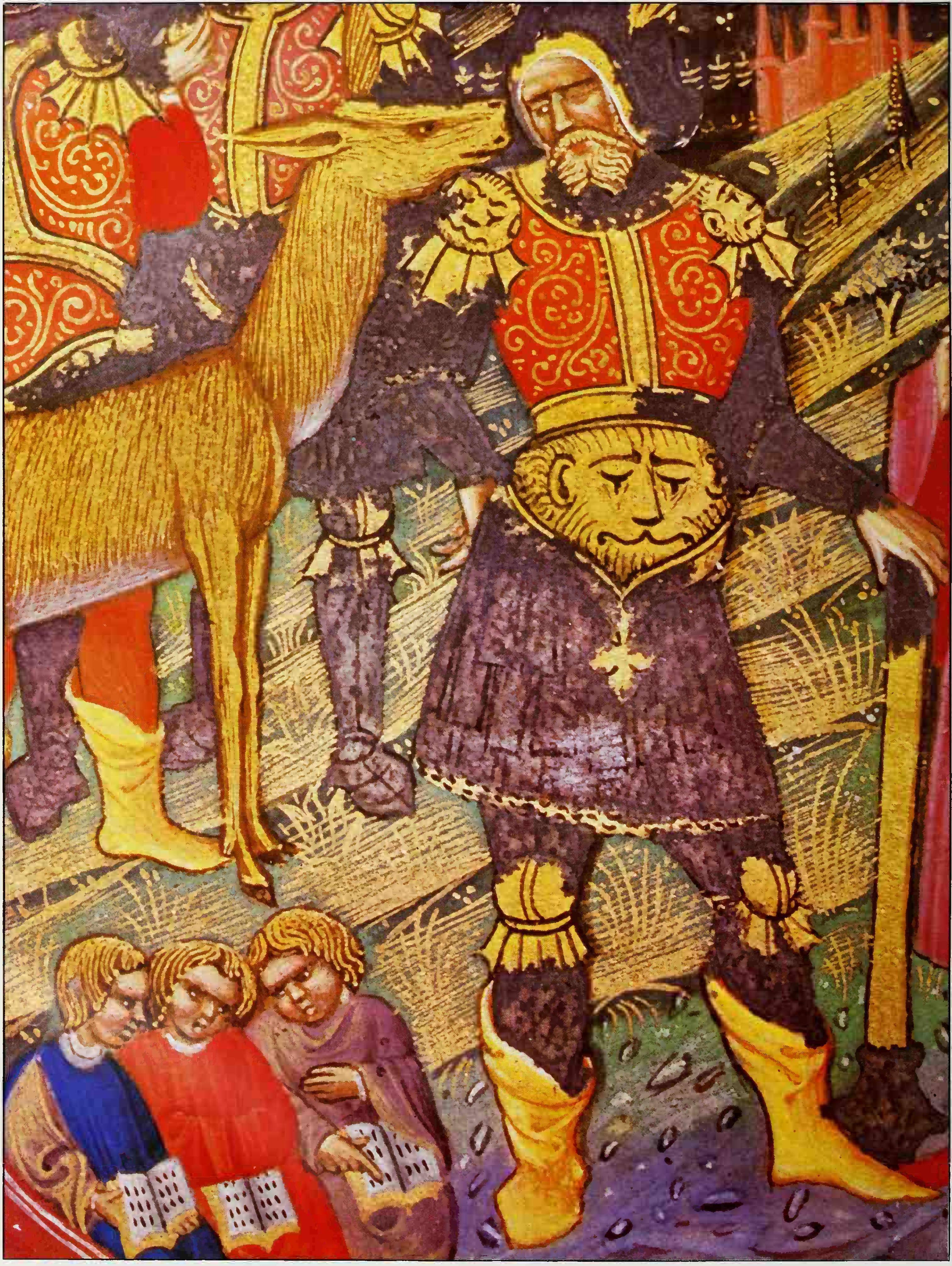
The abundance of legendary lore concerning deer where Celtic culture and languages survive confirms that the stag was regarded as a supernatural animal. In the Scottish Highlands and islands the deer is associated with supernatural beings, always female, and there are many tales of deer-human transformations. These fabulous creatures are seldom malicious, but they are sometimes thought of as being gigantic. There was one, for instance, who was so colossal that when she waded across the Sound of Mull the water came only up to her knees.

A Gaelic tale relates that after a tragedy in which her baby was killed, a woman took to the hills where she lived with the deer and eluded her husband's attempts to capture her. After seven years he decided to marry again, but when the day for the wedding arrived his wife appeared at the church and took her place by his side; she was covered in fine fur like that of a red deer fawn. In other tales a hunter sees a deer turn into a woman and falls in love with her. He arranges to meet her at a church where they are to be married, but their plans are foiled by a witch.



Axel Poignant

The stag was widely regarded as a supernatural animal; in some areas it was thought to be connected with the underworld, but there are also signs that it was associated with the sun. Carving of a stag and a Viking, on a cross at Middleton in Yorkshire



British Museum

After many adventures they meet on a distant island and marry.

According to another Celtic legend Ossian hurled his spear at, but missed, a beautiful white deer, who turned out to be his mother. She led him to a rock in which a door mysteriously opened, and closed after them, and then revealed herself as a lovely woman. Yet another story describes how a hunter wounded a deer which managed to escape. Later she appeared to him in a dream, in human form, and returned the arrow with which he had shot her.

The ghosts of deer were thought to change into supernatural women. In some areas the lore concerning deer suggests that they were connected with the underworld but there are also signs that they were solar animals; a rock engraving in Scandinavia shows stags drawing the disc of the sun.

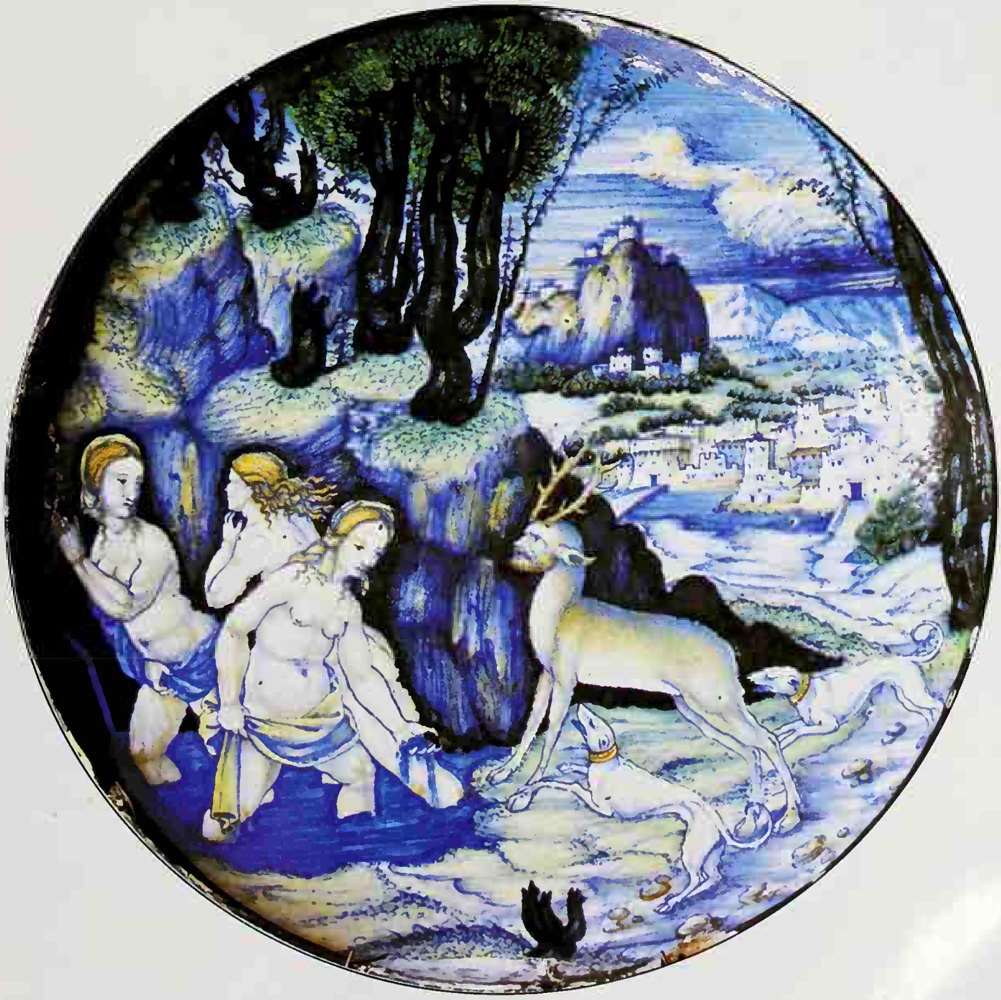
Fairies' Cattle

Folklore in Scotland and elsewhere refers so frequently to deer serving mankind in various ways that it has been suspected that red deer were domesticated at some time in the remote past. However, with the exception of the reindeer, there is little firm evidence of their having been tamed in ancient times. In Scotland they were said to be the fairies' cattle, and tales of benevolent deer go back to ancient times. Telephus, Hercules's son by the virgin priestess of Athens, was abandoned in a forest, and was said to have been suckled by a doe. Stories of Christian saints and hermits similarly describe their receiving sustenance from these creatures. Hermits gave sanctuary to hunted deer, who aided them in various ways, by carrying baggage, or providing an antler book rest or antler candlesticks.

The antlers of deer have often been regarded as having special powers, often magical. Picks made from deer-horn, and a chalk phallus, which were found at the end of a worked-out seam in a Neolithic flint mine at Grimes Graves in Norfolk may have been placed there in the hope that the mine could be made more productive. Practically every part of the deer has been believed to have medicinal qualities, in one part of Europe or another, while in China powdered antlers was thought to be an aphrodisiac. In some areas antlers are hung up on buildings to ward off evil influences.

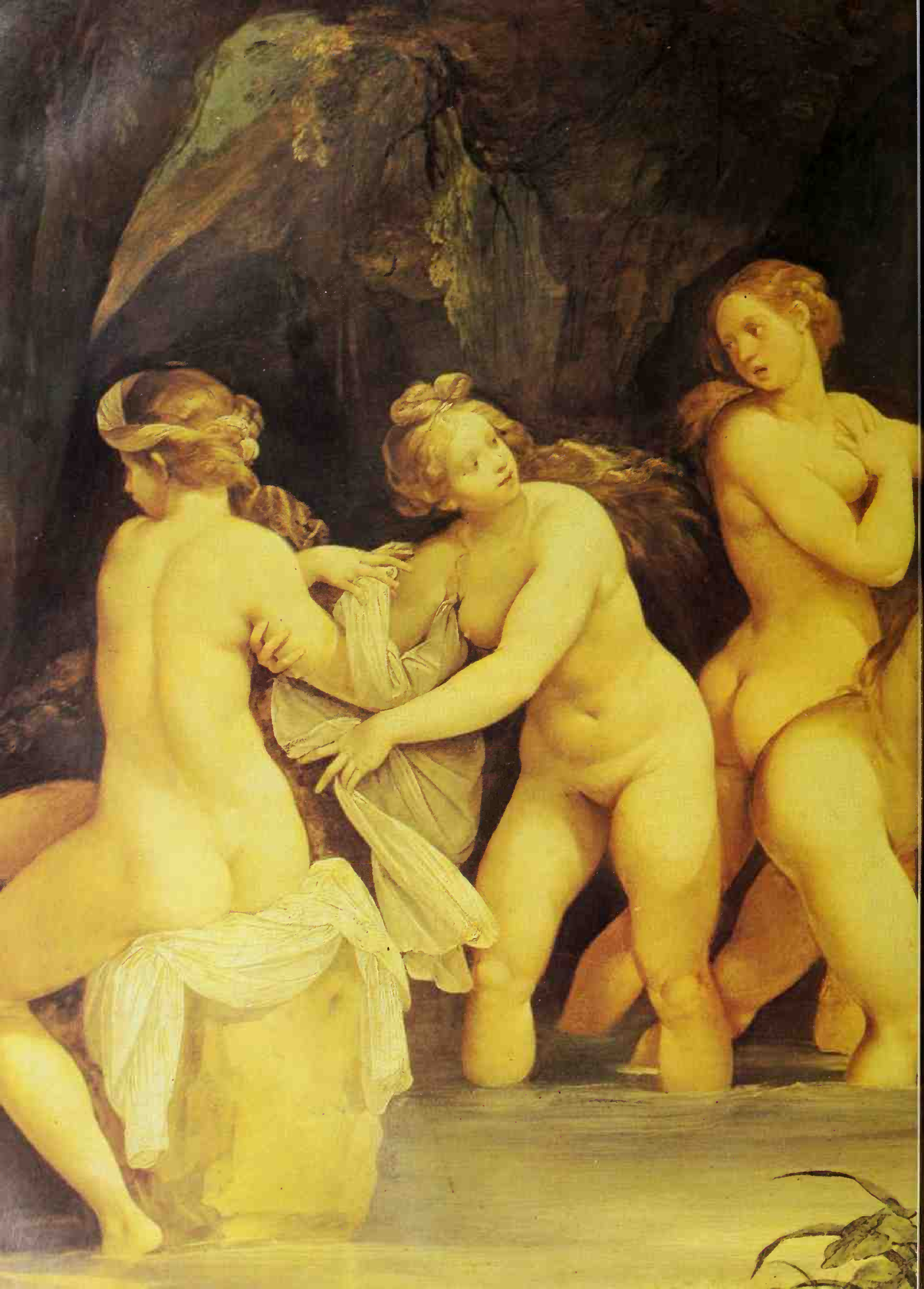
E. A. ARMSTRONG

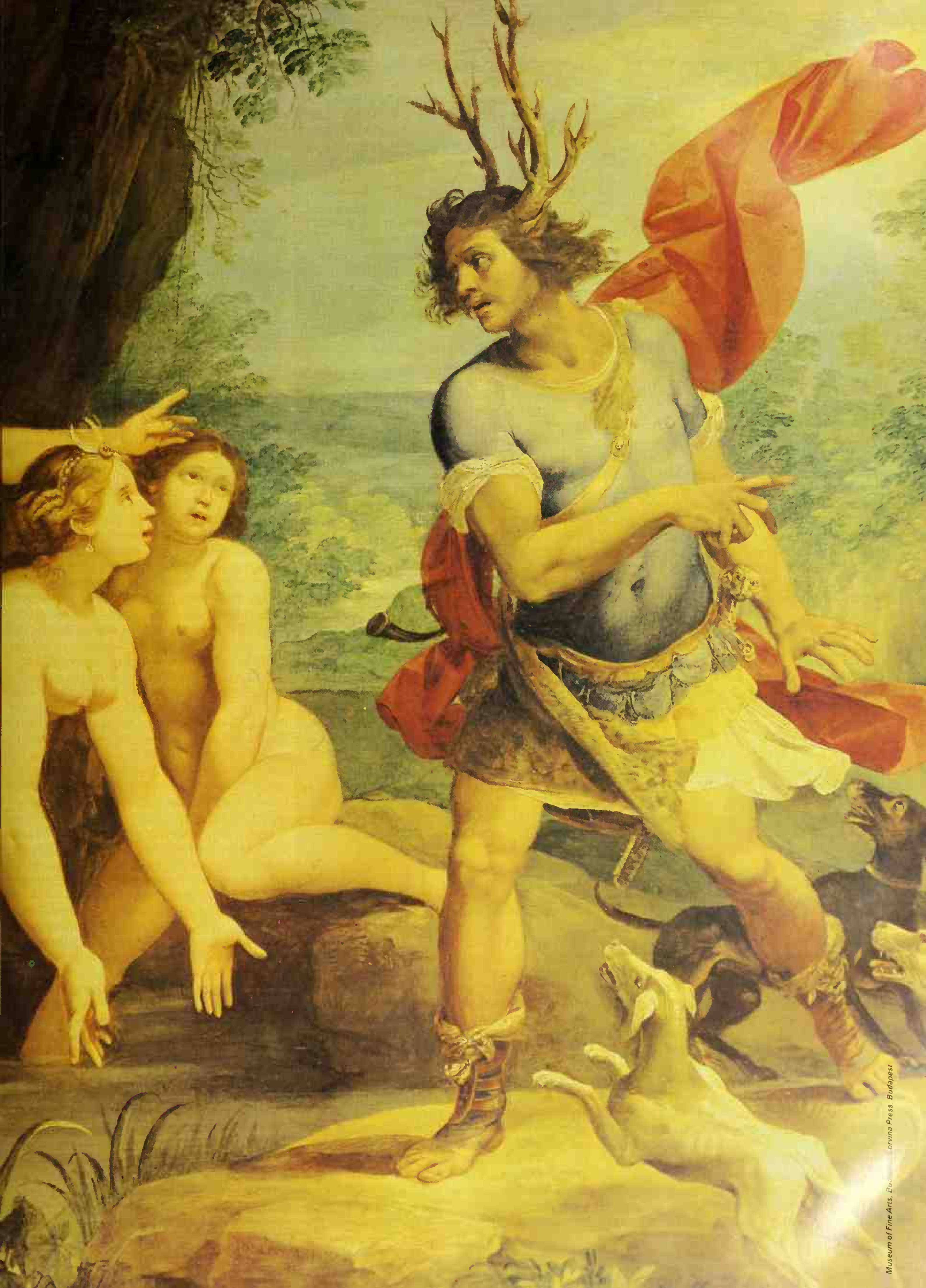
Homer Sykes



Victoria & Albert Museum/C. M. Dixon

Left **The relationship between stags or deer and human beings is generally a benevolent one; the Roman general Sertorius gained the goodwill of the inhabitants of Spain because he had a pet fawn which they regarded as a sign of divine protection: Sertorius and his fawn, 15th century Italian manuscript *Above right* Horned animals were of ritual importance to primitive man, who regarded them as sources of fertility and power: the Horn Dance, performed in Abbots Bromley every year, is a relic of pagan worship. There are many tales of people being transformed into deer; in Greek mythology Diana turned Actaeon into a stag because he saw her bathing: a 16th century Italian dish *(right)* and a painting by Giuseppe Cesari *(following page)* both depict Actaeon's transformation**





Museum of Fine Arts, Bu[illegible] Corvina Press. Budapest

RUDOLF STEINER

RUDOLF STEINER (1861-1925) was born at Kraljevic in Hungary (subsequently in Yugoslavia) in the days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His father was a minor official on the railways and subsequently stationmaster at various places in Austria, but his family on both sides were peasant stock from the region north of the Danube.

Rudolf, the eldest child, was educated in Austria and spent most of his adult life in Germany and Switzerland. Prodigiously brilliant, the young Steiner grew up with a rare interest in both science and the humanities, and when he was only 22 he was commissioned to edit Goethe's scientific writings. He went to work at the Goethe archives in Weimar on a new edition, and his work on Goethe's theory of colour was to influence the Russian painter Vasily Kandinsky (see COLOURS).

Steiner moved to Berlin in 1897, edited a literary magazine and taught at a college for working men. He was soon in close touch with the Theosophical Society (see THEOSOPHY), rising to a high position in its German branch, of which he became general secretary in 1902. He was the Society's leading lecturer in Germany for ten years, but in the end Theosophy did not satisfy him; nor did the Order of Oriental Templars (OTO), with its reputation for sex magic, to which he belonged before the First World War. Steiner was to come in for much criticism on this score, though there is no evidence that he himself ever practised sex magic, and his followers have always found the connection thoroughly embarrassing. Marie von Sievers, an actress who was Steiner's lieutenant in the Theosophical Society, became his second wife in 1914.

A Mission in Life

At an early age, Steiner discovered that he had clairvoyant powers. He was aware of 'beings' in trees and in mountains. At the end of his teens, so he later said, he was initiated into the esoteric mysteries by a figure he would only ever identify as 'the M' or 'the Master'.

He became convinced that he had a mission in life to reconcile religion and science, and always regarded his teaching as 'spiritual science'. Hence his attraction to Theosophy and his interest in the mysterious Rosicrucian Brotherhood of the 17th century (see ROSICRUCIANS). Steiner in turn was to influence 'Rosicrucian' groups in England in his day, especially the Stella Matutina, or Order of the Morning Star, which was one of the offshoots of the Golden Dawn (see GOLDEN DAWN). He met the head of it, R.W. Felkin, when the latter was searching Germany in vain for the tomb of Christian Rosenkreutz, and again on a visit to London in 1912. Steiner regarded his own system as Rosicrucianism perfected.

Steiner believed that he could learn the true history and nature of mankind, and of the cosmos since the remotest reaches of geological time, from the Akashic Records, the supposed imprint made by all events of the past upon the astral plane. He believed in the lost worlds of Lemuria and Atlantis. With imagination's eye he could confidently descry the inward operations of plants and the soil, of crystals and metals. He also perceived people's astral bodies (including that of the philosopher Nietzsche), the souls of the dead, and numerous non-human spiritual entities, moving on higher planes, but acting on the physical plane of human existence as well. He observed that some of these worked against humanity's best interests by striving to keep men and women enslaved to the body and physical nature.

Human beings, Steiner taught, had originally been of a far more spiritual nature themselves and possessed of formidable powers, which they had lost in descending into the material sphere of existence. Christ came into the world to rescue fallen humanity by opening the way to an escape from captivity in matter and a return to the high spiritual level, to be gained by disciplined use of the intellect and the imagination. Not only mankind, but everything in the universe, Steiner thought, had 'fallen' from its original spiritual state and condensed into matter. The appearance of Christ had begun a slow process of cosmic respiritualization. Steiner came to see Christ as the most significant figure of all history, but he regarded the gospels as esoteric texts, whose inner meaning was concealed beneath the surface of their words.

The Anthroposophical Society

In 1912 Steiner fell out with Annie Besant and the Theosophists. He firmly believed in reincarnation and karma (he thought he had been Gilgamesh in a previous life), but he had become unhappy with the Society's coolness to Christianity and concentration on oriental traditions, which he regarded as fundamentally unsuited to the western mind. And he could not accept that Annie Besant's protege, Jiddu Krishnamurti, the heralded new World Teacher, was a reincarnation of Jesus Christ. Breaking away, he founded his own Anthroposophical Society (*Der Anthroposophische Bund*) the following year. Such was his reputation and magnetism that some 2500 of the Theosophical Society's members went with him. The movement to begin with was almost entirely German: with war raging between Germany and England from 1914 to 1918, only a handful of English members joined, some of them from the Order of the Golden Dawn.

Steiner had coined the term 'anthroposophy' years before, from the Greek words *anthropos*, 'man', and *sophia*, 'knowledge' or 'wisdom'. It enshrined a pun, meaning at once both 'knowledge of mankind' and 'mankind's knowledge'. Steiner accepted the old principle of macrocosm and microcosm, of man as a miniature image of the universe (see MACROCOSM AND MICROCOSM), and he regarded anthroposophy as 'a path of knowledge', which guides the spiritual in humanity to the spiritual component of the universe as a whole, through the four channels of the senses, imagination, intuition and inspiration.

Steiner believed in four components or elements of the self. The physical body is concerned with sensory perception, the etheric body with imaginative knowledge, the soul or astral body with inspirational knowledge and the spirit or ego or 'I' with intuitive or spiritual knowledge. He worked out methods for personal growth at all four of these levels.

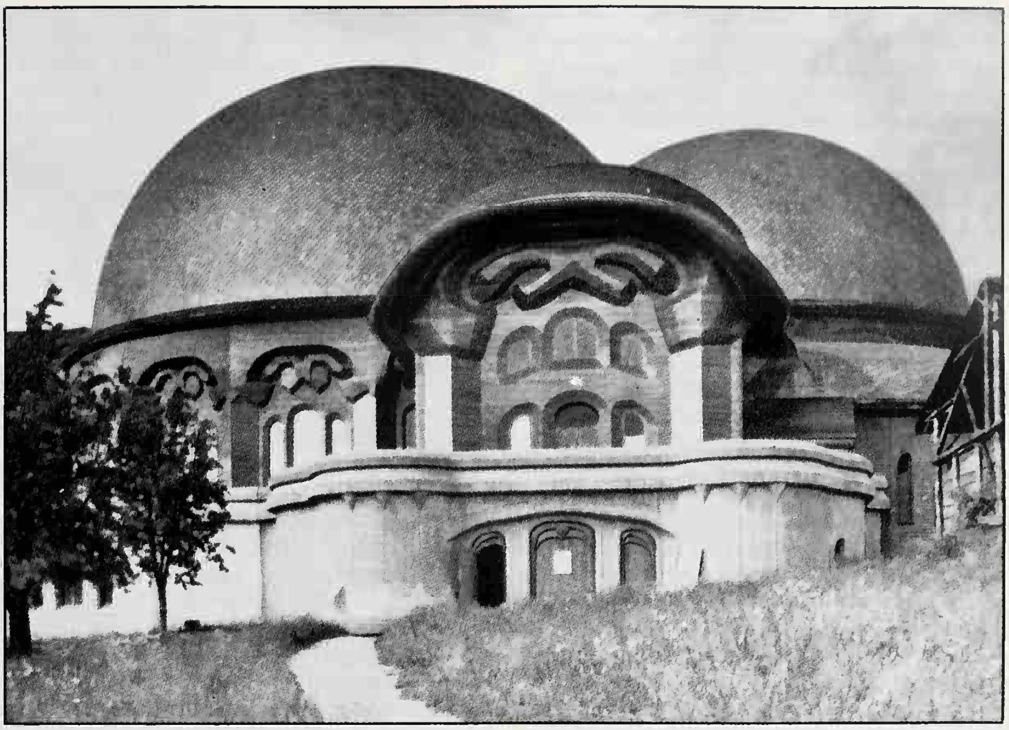
The Goetheanum

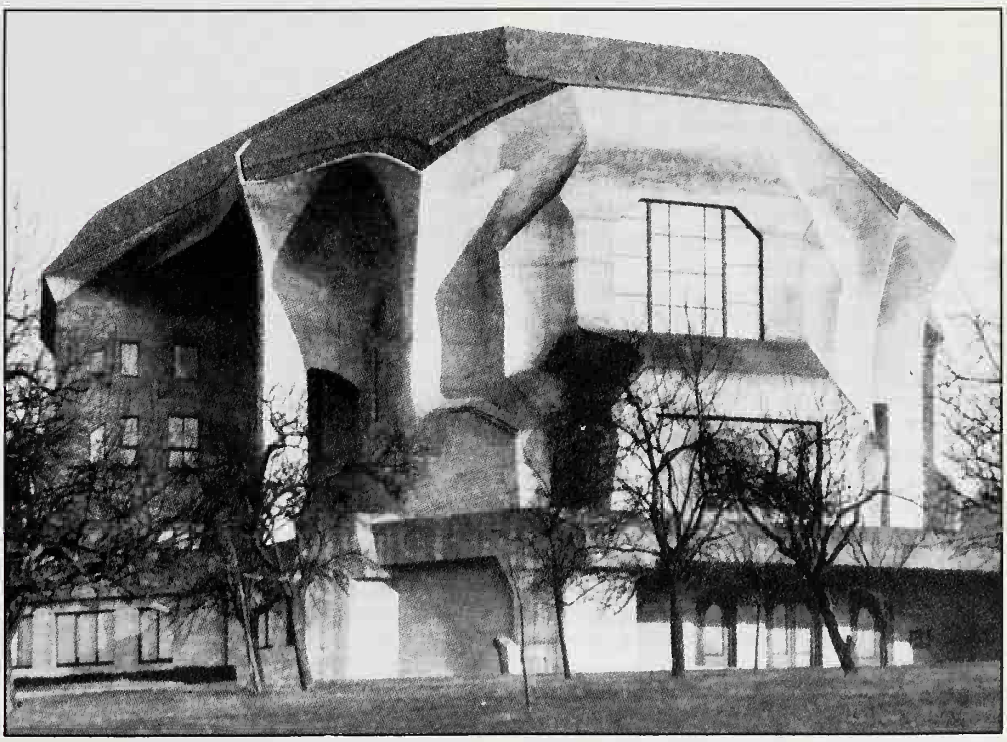
In the same year that he founded his new society (1913), Steiner designed and erected, at Dornach in Switzerland, a wooden building which he called the Goetheanum, to give solid form to his theories about architecture, colour, painting and sculpture. Of its two intersecting domes, the larger was bigger than that of St Paul's Cathedral in London. The Goetheanum was almost completed when it burned down on New Year's Eve in 1922. Steiner blamed the catastrophe on the spiritual imperfections of his disciples. A fireproof replacement in concrete was built, which is still the Anthroposophical Society's spiritual centre. It is a strange building, which has been described as resembling a womb or a rock that is alive inside. The symbol of the snake swallowing its own tail, an emblem of eternity and rebirth, makes its appearance, and in one of the rooms is a statue, partly carved by Steiner himself, which shows a human figure struggling with, and subduing, two demonic beings, Lucifer and Ahriman, who are opponents of human spiritual progress.

After the First World War, Steiner proposed the establishment of a Threefold Commonwealth, a utopia to solve the problems of Europe. It was based on his threefold model of human physiology, in which thinking is linked with the brain and the nerves, feeling with the rhythmic processes of the heart and the lungs, and the will with the limbs and the metabolism. He suggested that society is constructed on the same pattern, with three spheres of human activity, each of which should have a corresponding social organization: a cultural sphere dedicated to the ideal of liberty, a political sphere with the ideal of equality and an economic sphere with the ideal of fraternity. These three spheres, correctly organized and conducted, would harmonize together as naturally as the head, the heart and the hand, to which they correspond. However, the idea never got off the ground.

In 1922 Steiner was a moving spirit in the founding of the Christian Community or Movement for Religious Renewal, an organization intended to bridge the gulf between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches. He intended his spiritual science to replace existing religion, however, and in the following year he reorganized the Anthroposophical Society as the General Anthroposophical Society, whose headquarters were at the Goetheanum in Dornach. It was there that he died two years later, aged 64.

Steiner was a strikingly impressive figure, though short in stature, with deep-set eyes in a thin, lined, sensitive face. He often dressed eccentrically and liked to wear a flamboyantly unrestrained cravat. He spent much time in meditation, voyaging in unseen realms, and people whe met him felt that he radiated a formidable inner power.





Rudolf Steiner, the charismatic founder of the Anthroposophical Society and a prolific lecturer and author. He is one of the few occultists whose name is known outside esoteric circles and his ideas have had a lasting influence in many fields *Above right* The first Goetheanum, which was burnt down on 31 December 1922, and (*below right*) its concrete replacement, still the headquarters of the Society

Vastly well-read and proteanly many-sided, he wrote about philosophy, the visual arts, music, speech, agriculture, medicine, the social sciences and education as well as spiritual matters – though to him, of course, all these were spiritual matters. He wrote more than 350 books all told and delivered thousands of lectures during his career. His three fundamental books are considered to be *Knowledge of the Higher World and Its Attainment*; *Theosophy, an Introduction to the Supersensible Knowledge of the World and the Destination of Man*; and *Occult Science, an Outline*. In his *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts* he provided what was to be his final account of his spiritual system.

In addition Steiner wrote mystery plays, with scenes set in spiritual realms as well as on earth. He invented a discipline called eurythmy, which he described as 'visible music', in which musical notes and letters of the alphabet are expressed in movements of the body. Marie Steiner (who lived on until 1948) took a prominent part in this and in the development of a special form of declamatory speech based on Steiner's clairvoyantly acquired knowledge of the larynx. Their work on eurythmy has been developed in the sphere of musical therapy and the use of sound in healing, and Steiner was a major pioneer of today's holistic medicine.

In agriculture Steiner was again a pioneer, in calling for the return of natural fertilizers. His greatest influence, however, has lain in the field of education. He emphasized respect for the child, the importance of the spiritual dimension, experience of colour and rhythm, the need for instruction in both science and the arts, discouragement of undue competitiveness, and the cultivation of the child's imaginative faculty. He was already lecturing about children's education in 1907 and in 1919 he put his theories into practice when he founded a school in Stuttgart for the children of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory's workforce there.

This school was the first of many, though Waldorf education was banned during the Nazi regime. The Waldorf Schools in Europe and the United States have taught thousands of children and are respected far beyond the ranks of Steiner's own followers. Steiner schools for retarded children are also highly regarded. After his death his disciples organised the Camphill Movement, which established villages for children and adults in need of special care, farms organised on Steinerian 'bio-dynamic' principles of agriculture, and laboratories for Steiner-type scientific research. Today, Germany, Holland, Britain and North America are the main strongholds of Anthroposophy.

FURTHER READING: Steiner's own works are kept in print by the Anthroposophical Press in New York and the Rudolf Steiner Press in London. See also R.A.McDermott ed, *The Essential Steiner* (Harper & Row, San Francisco, 1984). For Steiner's place in the western esoteric tradition, see G. Ahern, *Sun at Midnight* (Aquarian Press, [illegible]) and F.X.King, *Rudolf Steiner and Holistic Medicine* (Rider, 1986).

Physical phenomena have appeared in holy men and women for which no 'natural' cause has so far been found; it may be that profoundly religious temperaments can be correlated with metabolic effects in which biochemical and psychosomatic factors participate

STIGMATA

'WOUNDS', MARKS OR POINTS of bleeding which simulate the injuries of Christ, are known as stigmata. Stigmatics (those who receive stigmata) can develop marks corresponding to any or all of the piercing of hands and feet, the *ferita* or lance-wound in the side, the bruise on the shoulder caused by the weight of the cross, chafing of wrists and ankles, weals of scourging and a coronet on the brow (Crown of Thorns). Allied to the stigmata is the mystic ring, a modification of the skin or flesh of the ring-finger of the right hand, appropriate to a nun's 'bethrothal'.

If healing miracles are omitted as essentially psychological (see MIRACLES), the curious physical phenomena reported variously of some mystics include: stigmatization, *incendium amoris* ('flames of love'), incombustibility, fragrance, bodily elongation, and *inedia*, the ability to survive without food. Physiological peculiarities alleged of the mystic's mortal remains comprise the ability to bleed, incorruptibility and absence of rigor mortis. Levitation, irradiance, telekinesis and 'miracles of abundance' may also be classified as physical phenomena.

It is difficult to reject all the alleged physiological and physical phenomena as frauds or fictions. Admittedly we can have little confidence in many of the earlier reports, but the position has improved of late as a result of modern critical hagiography and the principles established by Pope Benedict XIV (1675-1758), who stressed that nothing should be ascribed to the supernatural if a natural explanation is possible. Extraordinary phenomena (other than posthumous miracles of healing) are not nowadays required in proof of holiness of life; and this diminishes the motive for ascribing wonders to the virtuous departed.

The tests of evidence in this field are the same as those in psychical research or in historical studies. Eyewitness depositions are preferred to hearsay evidence, and should be recorded soon after the event with circumstantial detail. The value of depositions made at processes for beatification or canonization is often reduced by the lapse of time between the death of the candidate and the inquiry. Because of these or other uncertainties we cannot readily form a judgement concerning the status of fragrance, *incendium amoris*, bodily incorruption and so on, telekinesis or miracles of abundance. But with levitation, irradiance and stigmatization the evidential position is distinctly better.

Little is known with any certainty of these phenomena in the orient, in Islam or in the Orthodox Churches; Protestants, it seems, incline seldom to mysticism or mystic phenomena. Almost all the material worthy of study occurs in the Roman Catholic sphere. Non-Catholic students (such as the present writer) have to overcome a barrier of initial scepticism. But it is wrong to suppose that intelligent Catholics (to whom we are indebted for searching critical studies) have all been gullible. Even in the 13th century, many ecclesiastical authorities would bear heavily on mystics suspected of fraud or love of notoriety.

In the present context 'mysticism' means 'mystical prayer' ('contemplation'). It is not given to all to graduate from ordinary prayer to any or all of the three stages of mystical prayer. At the first level the mystic concentrates his mind, by conscious effort, on divine themes. If the state of 'full union' supervenes, he enjoys a sense of divine presence but is still capable of voluntary withdrawal, unless the state of 'rapture' or 'ecstasy' has been attained. Ecstasy is, broadly speaking, a kind of trance in which the mind is cut off from the environment unless aroused by some drastic intervention such as a blow or an imperative command. Sometimes, when overtaken by ecstasy, the mystic continues in automatic fashion with his present occupation, which may be preaching or saying Mass. (See ECSTASY.)

In Contact with God

Attempts have been made to equate ecstasy with other forms of trance; hysterical catalepsy, somnambulism, hypnotism, the mediumistic trance or drug-induced states; but it is unsafe to suppose that these conditions are identical either to one another or to ecstasy. Religious mystics normally interpret ecstasy in terms of real contact with God. This is debatable in cases where they receive demonstrably false revelations concerning matters of fact. But in other cases the belief cannot be contradicted, though equally it cannot be logically proved true. Judgement has therefore to be suspended in the face of an important empirical fact; the majority of the alleged physical phenomena occur in persons who engage in mystical prayer and experience ecstasies. This goes some way to explain why, if the phenomena are not fraudulent or illusory, they belong only to religions where mystical prayer is practised. The link between ecstasies and phenomena does not, of course, prejudge the issue as to whether the latter are supernatural or due to obscure natural causes.

Few stigmatizations, if any, can be dated earlier than 1224 when, it is said, St Francis of Assisi (see FRANCIS OF ASSISI) received wounds in hands and feet after a vision of a seraph received during ecstasy. His stigmata were described as fleshy excrescences resembling the curved-over point of a nail on the palm, and a nail-head on the back of the hand. But examination of portraits of the saint and evidence from modern cases suggest that the excrescences were merely raised scar tissue, so that the problem is reduced to how the wounds originated. As many as 300 subsequent instances of stigmatization have been alleged but only a few provide data of value.

Elena Ajello (born in 1901 in Montalto Uffugo, Calabria, Italy) was especially devoted to St Rita of Cascia (1386-1457), who was said to have had an evil-smelling stigmatic wound which remained unhealed in her forehead. In 1923 Elena experienced a vision in which Christ injured her brow with his own Crown of Thorns. Some hours later, while she was still in an ecstatic state, a physician was called to her because blood was flowing copiously from her forehead. Dr Turano wiped away the blood and found that at intervals she would contract her brow in a painful spasm and blood would then exude from the pores.

Similarly, when Dr Gerald Molloy wiped the blood from the backs and palms of the hands of the famous stigmatic Louise Lateau (1850-1883) of Bois D'Haine, Belgium, he found oval marks of a bright red hue about one inch long by half an inch wide. The blood forced its way through unbroken skin in sufficient quantity for visiting pilgrims to soak it up in their handkerchiefs several times in an hour. Dr Warloment of the Belgian Medical Academy enclosed Louise's arm in a special glass apparatus and showed that the bleeding was spontaneous and not due to prior irritation of the skin by Louise. Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774-1824) of Coesfeld, Rhineland, besides other stigmata, had the lance-wound on her right side and a Y-shaped cross on her chest, both of which were areas from which the blood exuded at certain times.

Bleeding through the skin is indeed an exceptional occurrence, but would seem to lie within the limits of what is naturally possible. Various facts weaken the case for supernatural causation. It is odd that twelve centuries elapsed without stigmatics. The historical facts of the Crucifixion are not made plain by the stigmata. Was Jesus pierced in the left side (Louise Lateau) or the right (Catherine Emmerich)? The shape of the stigmata vary between stigmatics and from time to time in the same person; the marks on the hands of Teresa Neumann (1898-1962; see NEUMANN) of Konnersreuth, Bavaria, were sometimes square and sometimes round. Catherine Emmerich's Y-shaped cross was unique to her, but resembled the unusual cross in the church of St Lambert at Coesfeld where Catherine had spent long hours in prayer. These oddities are suggestive of the influence not of the supernatural but of ideas that have become lodged in the mind of the stigmatic.

Indeed, if supernatural intervention be discounted, stigmatization cannot be explained naturalistically in purely organic terms such as haemophiliac bleeding, because of the specific location of the stigmata. Analysis shows that in stigmatic bleeding actual blood is exuded, which further distinguishes the condition from haemathidrosis, which is characterized by red perspiration due to the presence of the bacterium *Micrococcus prodigiosus*. The naturalistic explanation of stigmatization therefore sees the stigmata as the result of auto-suggestion on the part of the stigmatics who, almost without exception, have been given to brooding intensely on the sufferings of Christ.

This theory is well supported by the fact that many stigmatics show undoubted signs

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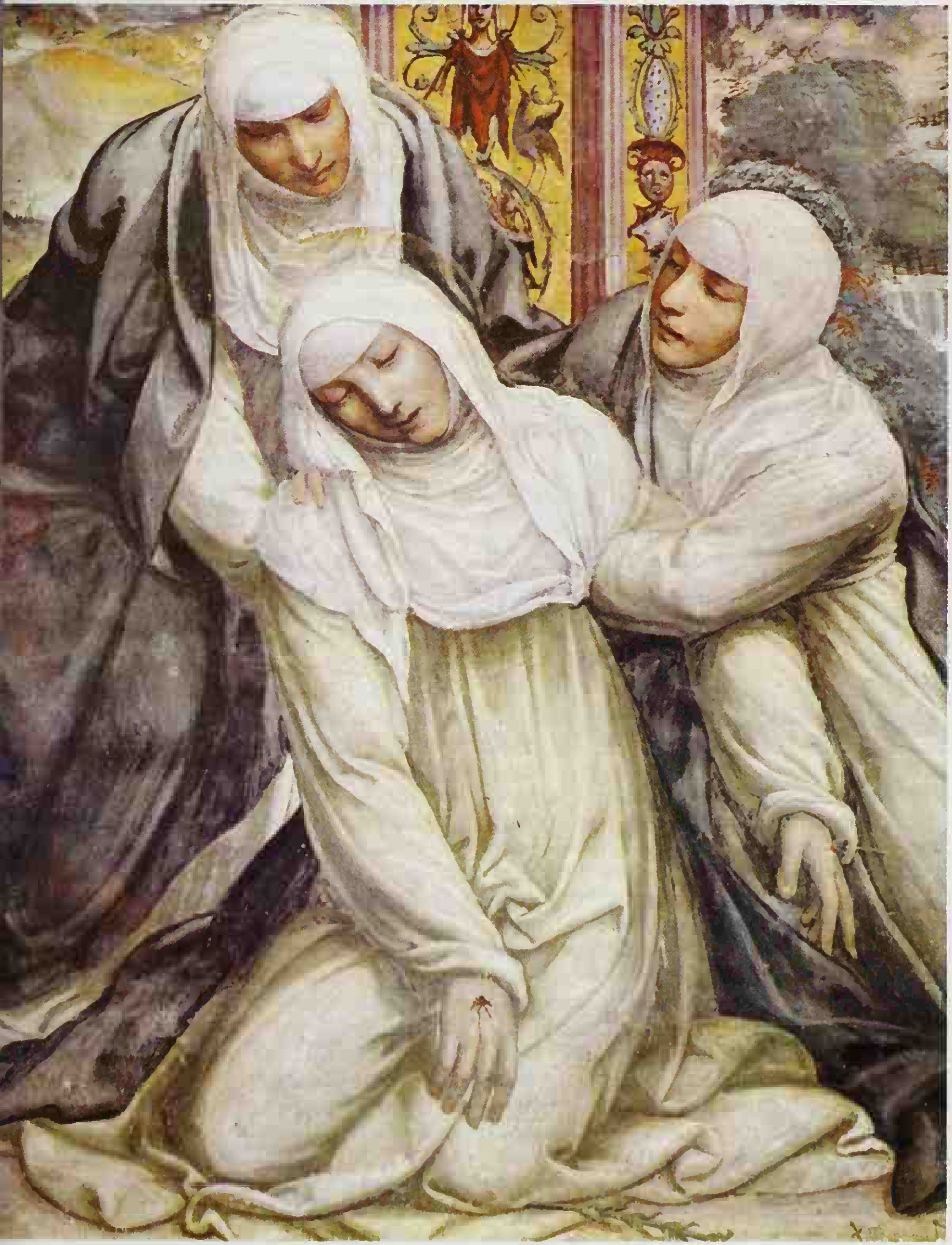


Scala

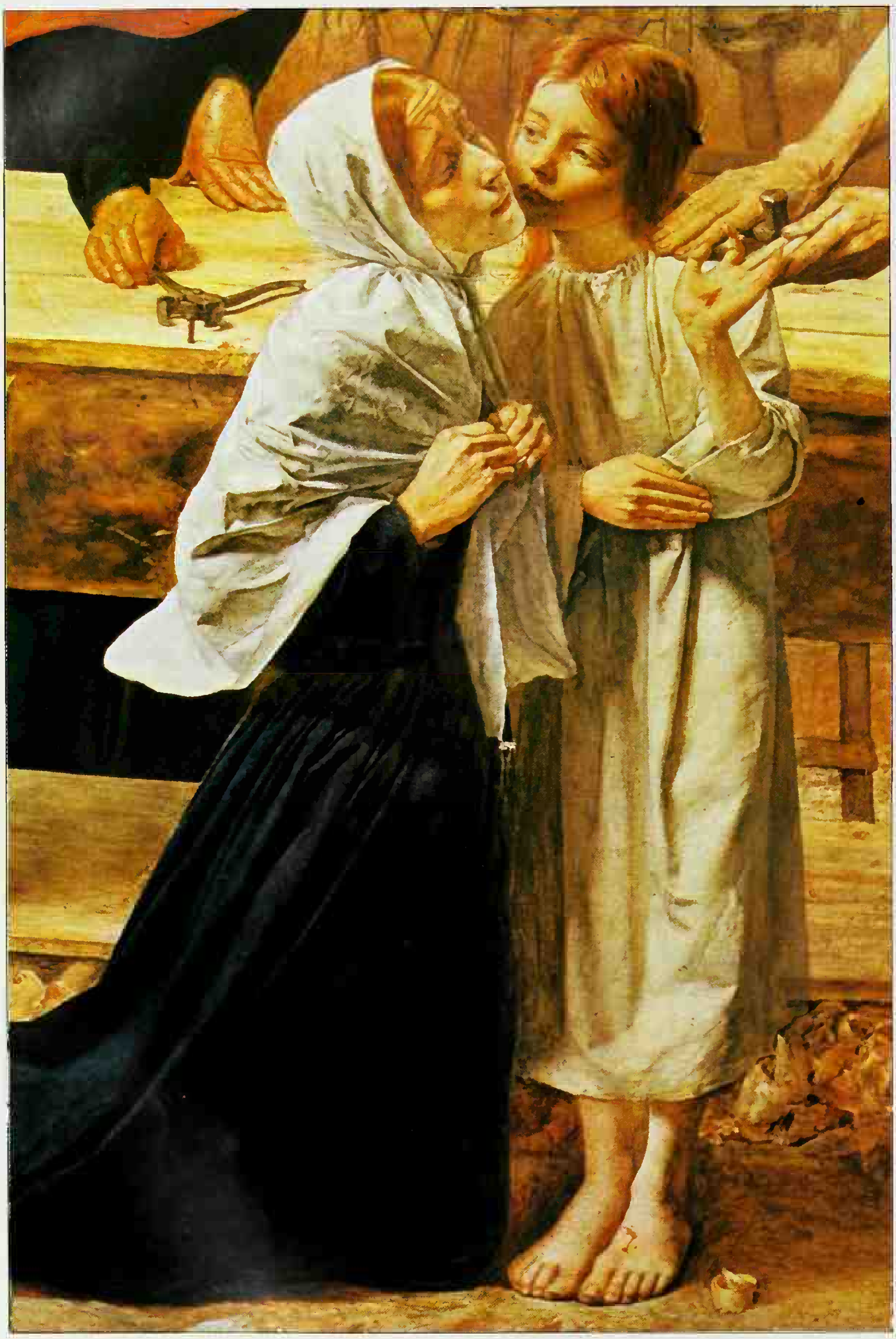
A naturalistic explanation of stigmata is that they are the result of autosuggestion on the part of the stigmatics who, almost invariably, have brooded intensely on Christ's sufferings *Left* Anne Catherine Emmerich: besides the stigmata shown in this picture, she also had the lance-wound on her right side, and a cross on her chest *Below left* St Catherine of Siena: she was said to have suffered the pain of the stigmata while undergoing a mystical experience at Pisa; painting by Sodoma

of having suffered from hysteria at some time in their lives. 'Hysteria' is employed in the technical sense to designate an illness that can take a bewildering variety of forms: temporary blindness, deafness, paralysis, losses of sensibility in the skin, or excessive sensibility; comas, fainting fits, spasms; miscellaneous aches and pains, and so on. Some stigmatics like Elena Ajello are described as manifesting hysterical symptoms. Others like Teresa Neumann and Berthe Mrazek suffer from mysterious paralyses of sudden onset, relieved by equally mysterious cures, which almost infallibly may be ascribed to hysteria.

A hysterical illness has no organic cause, being psychological in origin (see FAITH HEALING). But the patient is not shamming; he or she is really ill and is the victim of a complex and mainly unconscious process of auto-suggestion. When hysteria is found in a stigmatic it is a good indication of a high degree of auto-suggestibility. The naturalistic theory of stigmatization ascribes it to auto-suggestion, affecting blood flow and tissues, among persons endowed with unusual suggestibility and an obsession with the sufferings of Jesus. This is not quite the same as ascribing stigmatization directly to hysteria, which would go beyond the facts, as there are stigmatics like Pio Forgione (1887-1968), of the Capuchin monastery of San Rotundo near Foggia in Italy, who cannot at the present time be classified as hysterical (see PADRE PIO). The link between hysteria and stigmatization is merely that each is a possible result, in appropriate conditions, of a temperament potentially auto-suggestible in certain ways.

Wounds that Open and Close

Advocates of the supernatural origin of stigmata have stressed the rather minor character of the effects, such as blisters, rashes and eczemas, produced on the skin by suggestion under hypnotism. But this does not do full justice to Dr Adolph Lechler's results with 'Elizabeth', an Austrian peasant girl who was both very devout and under treatment for hysteria. On Good Friday 1932 she was deeply affected by seeing a film of the suffering and death of Christ, and (significantly) complained of pain in feet and hands. That evening Dr Lechler gave her the hypnotic suggestion that wounds would develop at the site of the pains. Moist wounds appeared during the night. Further suggestion deepened them, and resulted also in tears of blood, the Crown of Thorns and inflammation and sagging of the shoulder. Dr Lechler substantiated his claim with photographs taken before restoring normality by counter-suggestion.



Tate Gallery/Brompton Studio

In the light of Lechler's achievement it would be daring to say that stigmata are supernatural, and in modern canonization processes such as that of St Gemma Galgani (1878-1903) of Lucca the Church abstains from doing so. On the other hand, we cannot assert that stigmata have yet been proved entirely natural. Difficulty may rationally be felt concerning a naturalistic interpretation of St Gemma's stigmata. A beautiful Italian girl with a disposition of great sweetness, Gemma often had ecstasies each Thursday evening (a common pattern to which many stigmatics conform) when red marks showed on the backs and palms of the hands. A rent in the flesh opened by degrees, sometimes becoming very deep, the openings on each side almost reaching each other so far as could be ascertained without painful probing. The cavities were full of blood. On the Friday the flow would cease and the wounds close and heal with astonishing rapidity, usually leaving very little trace except sometimes a raised scar.

St Gemma's case lends credibility to the accounts of deep wounds in some of the older stigmatics such as St Mary Frances of the Five Wounds (1715-91). Extraordinary as these deep stigmata are, they do not decisively contradict the naturalistic hypothesis. 'Elizabeth's' wounds deepened under suggestion and we cannot say to what depth they might not have proceeded had Dr Lechler persisted with suggestion beyond the point that was medically ethical.

The genesis of the mystic ring is akin to that of stigmata. Marie-Julie Jahenny (1850-1941), a somewhat exhibitionistic stigmatic of La Faudrais in Brittany, was in the habit of announcing the particular stigmata she would receive some time before they appeared; a fact strongly in favour of the auto-suggestion hypothesis. In an ecstasy in January 1874 she predicted that she would plight her troth to her heavenly spouse on 20 February. On the predicted day in the presence of 14 witnesses the ring-finger of the right hand became swollen and red beneath the skin. Shortly afterwards it bled. Within 30 minutes a ring shaped formation appeared. There is evidence that Marie-Julie retained it for at least 20 years as a ring of fleshy tissue resembling a hoop which had sunk into the skin.

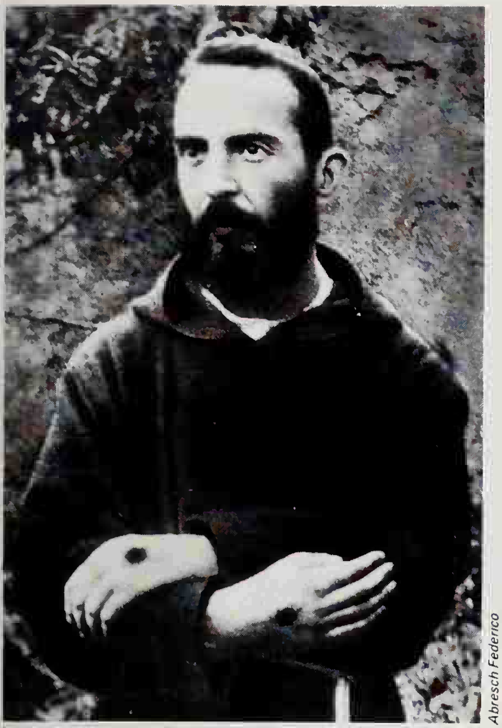
The tears of blood shed by St Gemma and others were observed by the French physician Dr Parrott in the last century in a patient (presumably hysterical) who shed them while affected by violent grief. She bled also from the breast, hands and knees.

It is a curious fact that, apart from St Francis, only three cases of conditions akin to stigmatization have been reliably reported as occurring in men, and these all in the present century. At first sight it might seem to follow from the correlation between hysteria and stigmatization, in view of the old belief in masculine immunity to hysteria. But this comfortable premise was shattered in the last century. Present estimates differ but it seems that hysteria, in one form or another, occurs in men at least half as frequently as in women. Retaining the naturalistic viewpoint there is no reason, however, either to deny the indirect link with hysteria or to suppose that the male stigmata are not produced by the same autosuggestive mechanism that operates in women. The low incidence in men may be explicable in terms of biological or hormonal differences between the sexes, or by a lesser proclivity to brood on physical aspects of the Crucifixion.

Flames of Divine Love

Some very famous saints such as Catherine of Genoa (1447-1510) and Mary Magdalen of Pazzi (1566-1607) were reputedly sufferers from *incendium amoris*, ascribed to the warmth of their love of God, so that even in winter they sought for cooling winds and cold compresses. In the case of the boy saint Stanislaus Kostka (1550-68), who died during his novitiate, we may suspect an actual infection. In other cases we might suppose the ardours to have been subjective. But Cardinal Crescenzi said of St Philip Neri (1515-95) that the touch of his hand was as from one in a raging fever, and the attendants of St Catherine in her last illness deposed that the blood she discharged was exceptionally hot, even for a patient in fever. At the beatification process of Serafino of Dio (d. 1699), nuns affirmed that it scorched them to touch her.

Fever of hysterical rather than organic origin has been alleged to occur as a medical condition, but would appear to be extremely rare. But it seems that a restricted region can have its temperature raised by hysterical mechanisms. (The left arm of a polter-



Abresch Federico

Above **Father Pio Forgione ('Padre Pio'); a Capuchin monk, he received the stigmata in 1915. As a novice he was reported to have run a fever with a temperature so high as to break the clinical thermometer** *Facing page* **Detail from** ***Christ in the House of His Parents*****: in this romantic painting by Millais, Jesus is depicted showing the stigmata in anticipation of the wounds that he later received on the Cross**

geist girl, Angelique Cottin, investigated in Paris in 1846, gave off a gentle heat.) St Philip Neri was neither stigmatized nor hysterical, but Mary Villani, St Catherine and Mary Magdalen were stigmatics, which may be relevant. We would however tend to disregard the whole problem were it not for Father Pio Forgione whose stigmata, received first in 1915, were declared in 1923 by the Holy Office not to have been proved to be supernatural. Father Pio was something of a latter-day Curé of Ars (see CURE OF ARS), because, though very reserved and retiring like St Jean Vianney, he was also a great confessor and was said to have the same gift of telepathy or 'reading of hearts', as well as other psychic abilities. It is said that as a novice at Benevento he occasionally ran a fever with a temperature so high as to break the clinical thermometer. Special measurements showed a blood heat of 112°F (45°C).

It would be unwise to speculate overmuch on incombustibility or immunity to fire because little of this nature has been asserted since the 16th century, when it was said that Venerable Domenica del Paradiso (1473-1553) could carry live charcoal in her hands. Numerous incidents of this sort were reported of St Francis of Paola (1416-1507), such as putting his hands into boiling oil or mending hot limekilns. St Catherine of Siena (1347-1389) and her clothes are said to have been miraculously preserved from scorching when she lay for an appreciable time in contact with the kitchen fire, in an ecstasy. Father Thurston has attempted to erect some parallels between mystic incombustibility and the practice of fire-walking, as well as the feats of the 19th century medium Daniel Dunglas Home (see HOME), but the subject seems at present beyond the reach of critical analysis.

Because of the opportunity for fraud in darkened seance rooms, it is hard to attach much significance to the fragrances (usually of known species such as rose, verbena or sandalwood) common at Spiritualist seance rooms in the last century. Peculiar smells, often unpleasant, reported in contemporary poltergeist cases are also difficult to assess. But stories concerning the 'odour of sanctity', perfumes manifesting in the vicinity of persons of holy life, are numerous. There was abundant testimony regarding the fragrance which clung to everything touched by St Mary Francis of the Five Wounds, and to the scent of a species of violet that was associated with St Catherine of Ricci (1522-29). These saints were stigmatics, as was Sister Mary of Jesus Crucified (d. 1878), who was similarly favoured according to her Carmelite companions. The nuns at Reckshill in New York State claimed that a wonderful fragrance persisted in their chapel after a visit by the stigmatic Margaret Reilly (d. 1937). In the case of St Veronica Giuliani (1676-1727) it was definitely believed that the scent proceeded from her stigmata. The same was said of Father Pio Forgione, and there appears to be competent medical testimony as to the objective reality of the scent, which was variously compared to roses, violets or incense.

It is not clear whether these fragrances are invariably associated with stigmata. No chemical analysis of stigmatic blood yet published has claimed to find aromatic substances therein. The door is by no means closed to a naturalistic explanation. Agreeable odours are occasionally reported by physicians in connection with various maladies; and it is not inconceivable that profoundly religious temperaments may be correlated in some degree with metabolic effects in which both biochemical and psychosomatic factors participate.

· Allegations of distortion or elongation of the mystic's person would seem on the face of it to be too grotesque for pious hagiographers to insert them into the record as conventional indications of sanctity. But there are no recent instances. Also, even if the veracity of the witnesses is accepted, there is in some cases a doubt as to whether the more understandable and better authenticated phenomenon of levitation has not been mistaken for elongation. Thus the fellow nuns of Sister Veronica Laparelli (1537-1620) measured her height with a yardstick and found that during her prolonged ecstasies she seemed to be some 10 inches taller than usual. But on one occasion Mother Plautilla Semboli put her hand under Veronica's robe and 'found she was lifted up above the ground'.

Other cases can in principle be explained as being hallucinatory, like the occasion in about 1700 when a single witness saw Sister Maria Constante Castreca 'grow a considerable height from the ground'. More puzzling was the affidavit signed by 21 ecclesiastics and notables to the effect that both arms of Blessed Stefana Quinzani (1457-1530) appeared to their view to be stretched some inches during her Friday ecstasies. There was muscular tension, swelling of the veins and blackening of the hands. But a careful reading suggests that the elongation may well have been within the limits of natural stretching possible in some individuals. Dr Imbert-Gourbeyre described some remarkable distensions, contractions and distortions exhibited by Marie-Julie Jahenny in 1880. Though he was a professor of medicine and believed the contortions to be inexplicable, we are entitled to reserve our opinion, particularly in view of the fact that the stigmatic had previously announced that her body would be compressed and her limbs shortened in expiation of the sins of mankind.

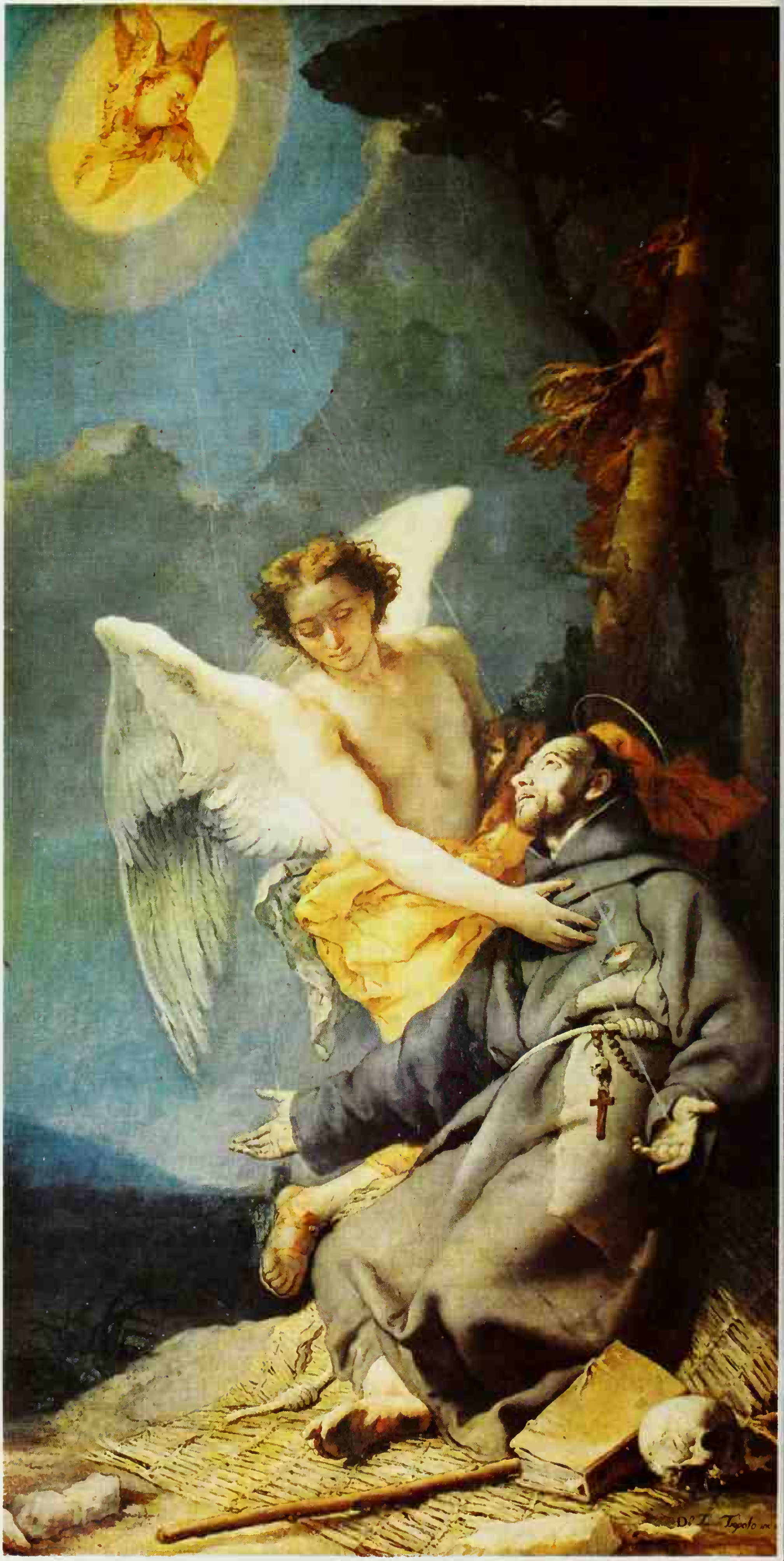
The Ecstatic Fast

Living with very little food, *inedia*, varies from instances like that of the Curé of Ars, where great activity is maintained on a very light diet, to cases often hailed as miraculous where the individual, almost invariably a woman, apparently survives for months and years on no food and little drink. Many attempts have been made to prove by observation that fasting is complete, and occasionally they end tragically in the subject's death, which suggests that the inedic does in fact take a little nourishment when unsupervised. Inedics are not always Roman Catholics or even particularly religious. Usually there is evidence of nervous disorder; they are bedridden with a mysterious illness, or given to fits or trances.

Hysteria inedia or anorexia is a very well known disorder, and can end in death. The anorexic is often literally incapable of accepting solid food and rejects it by automatic choking or vomiting outside of conscious control. It is not fully understood why inedics can survive for such long periods and it would be foolish to underestimate residual difficulties of naturalistic explanation. But there is no obvious feature by which inedia in the devout differs from anorexia in hysterical persons. Religious inedics usually show other signs of hysteria; female stigmatics are almost invariably inedics also.

As pointed out by Father Thurston, a surprisingly high proportion of saints have been exhumed after beatification and their bodies discovered to be in a remarkably good state of preservation. In only a few cases has beatification or canonization been authorized on the basis of apparent incorruptibility of the remains. The body of St Bernadette of Lourdes (1844-79; see LOURDES) was found to be incorrupt in 1909, though the face was brown and the eyes sunken, but only bones were found when St Therese of Lisieu (1863-97) was disinterred.

If there is no circulation of air the decay of a corpse can be hindered. Dry conditions favour mummification even if there has been no embalmment. Moisture sometimes produces saponification, in which the internal tissues are converted into a kind of ammoniacal soap, called adipocere, and the



Few, if any, stigmatizations can be dated before 1224, when St Francis of Assisi is said to have received wounds in his hands and feet, after a state of ecstasy during which he had a vision of a seraph: *St Francis receiving the Stigmata*, painting by Tiepolo

skin becomes like that of a mummy. The body of Blessed Marie Pelletier was found in this condition in 1903 when exhumed 35 years after death. But when Blessed Anna Maria Taigi (1769-1837) was exhumed in 1868, the surgeon reported that the corpse resembled that of a person only three days dead. The skin was soft and discharged an inoffensive, somewhat aromatic, fluid, recalling the balsam or oil which has been reported of the bodies of holy persons on other occasions. The absence of rigor mortis has often been commented upon, but might just possibly occur naturally in aged inedics who have had a tranquil death. Liquidity of the blood and bleeding from incisions long after death have also been alleged. At present it seems impossible to say whether or not naturalistic explanations are potentially available, or whether attitudes of mind during life can bequeath unusual biochemical features to the remains.

Lifted Up by Ecstasy

Psychokinesis is the name given in parapsychology to the movement of objects by means unknown to physics (see PSYCHOKINESIS). It occurs in poltergeist outbreaks (see POLTERGEISTS) and is alleged to happen in seance rooms. Catholic writers recognize 'diabolical assaults' on the religious, which to the non-Catholic bear a considerable resemblance to poltergeist phenomena. Psychokinesis is rarely alleged of the more recent saints. However, the term telekinesis is applied to the spontaneous flight of the host (the wafer of consecrated bread in the Mass) to the mouth of a divinely-favoured recipient. An aspirant to a reputation for sanctity might fraudulently conceal a wafer in his mouth prior to announcing the miracle, as seems to have been done by Vittoria Bondi in the 18th century. However when the Curé of Ars said that the host once detached itself from his fingers and placed itself upon the tongue of a communicant we cannot doubt his veracity, although the possibility of a hallucination or a false memory remains. It is also possible that the Curé produced the 'miracle' himself by unconscious psychokinesis, having been for many years the centre of poltergeist activity.

Teleportation or apportation, the mysterious conveyance of objects into closed rooms, is alleged both of poltergeist cases and the mediumistic seance. The only phenomena at all analogous to teleportation met with in connection with latter-day saints are alleged miracles of abundance.

The heaps of corn in the granary of the 'Filles de la Croix' at La Poye, Poitou, in France, were mysteriously replenished over a continuing period around 1824, after St Andrew Fournet (1752-1834) had prayed over them. But one wonders whether the supplies were put there stealthily by an unknown well-wisher. One is at a loss to comment on St John Bosco's basket which contained initially only a score of rolls, but which in 1860 provided, it seems, enough bread for his 300 students. Interestingly enough, no other marvels are narrated of 'Don Bosco' (1815-88), not even ecstasies.

Levitation is alleged of comparatively few saints, which suggests it is not a hagiographic commonplace. Professor Leroy's scholarly review lists 50 traditions as ancient (before 1500), 85 cases as modern (1500 to 1800), and 20 cases as recent (since 1800). In the ancient traditions, as with St Dunstan (918-988) and St Francis, we encounter the difficulty that their levitations are mentioned by their later biographers but not their earliest ones. Some modern critics have taken the view that levitation is purely a subjective feeling experienced by ecstatic persons, many of whom have certainly spoken of a sense of lightness and of being lifted up. But the case of St Joseph Mary Desu (Joseph of Copertino, 1603-63) is adequate by itself to prove the occurrence of levitation as an objective physical happening. Very slow of wit, he nevertheless gained such fame in the district of Copertino in southern Italy for his goodwill, piety and holiness that he was examined by the Inquisition of Naples but acquitted of the charge of deceiving the populace by false miracles. Subsequently the authorities, rendered even more suspicious by his levitations, transferred him to Assisi, Urbino, Fossombrone and Osimo, but at each place he attracted a pilgrimage.

Joseph's levitations occurred during joyous raptures which could easily be triggered off by music or the sight of a sacred image or a beautiful leaf or twig. Sometimes they were simple suspensions in the air, as happened in Rome before Pope Urban VIII, to which the Holy Father testified. At Copertino alone, no less than 70 levitations are alleged. Some were comical rather than edifying. The wife of the High Admiral of Castile fainted when she and her husband saw Joseph fly a distance of 12 paces over their heads. The Lutheran Duke of Brunswick, and his chaplain, saw Joseph at Mass transported in the air about five paces from the altar while still in a kneeling posture, and return in similar fashion. They converted to Catholicism.

Joseph's flights are exceptional among levitators. The majority of eyewitness accounts concerning other mystics (and there are many relating to widely different times and places) affirm that the mystic is suspended about six inches above the ground while in ecstasy and at length makes a gentle landing. The levitating mystic may be preaching, like St Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787) and St Andrew Fournet, or praying like St Teresa of Avila and the great theologian Francis Suarez (1548-1617). The evidence is not conclusive but it strongly suggests that levitation occurs only in ecstasy. In 24 cases out of the 155 listed by Leroy the face or figure of the levitating ecstatic has been said to give off or be bathed in a mysterious radiance. Sometimes this light is said to emanate from a sacred image or crucifix, but in other cases there is no obvious source. Puzzling as this may be, it in no way invalidates such evidence for levitation as rests on the non-irradiated cases like St Joseph's. Levitation (including radiance) is the one mystic phenomenon requiring us to postulate either a supernatural explanation or the existence of natural forces unknown to physics.

On a naturalistic view such forces are possibly the same as those released in poltergeist outbreaks, but with a different 'style' of operation corresponding to a radically different psychological situation. The contrast between the wilder transportations of St Joseph and the gentler levitations of most mystics so favoured also points to psychological factors. Accounts of radiance are not easily equated to the 'aura' as described in occultist literature. Scientists have tended to discount the observation by the reputable 19th-century French physician Charles Féré of orange-coloured light surrounding the head and hands of two hysterical patients.

A.R.G.OWEN

FURTHER READDING: Fr. Amadeo, *Blessed Gemma Galgani* (Burns and Oates, 1935); Charles M. Carty, *The Two Stigmatists* (Veritas, Dublin, 1956); Paul Siwek, S.J., *The Riddle of Konnersreuth* (Browne and Nolan, Dublin, 1954); Robert D. Smith, *Comparative Miracles* (Herder, St Louis, Missouri, 1965); Montague Summers, *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism* (Rider, 1950); Herbert Thurston, S. J., *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism* (Burns and Oates, 1952).

Archeology has shown that Stonehenge was not built by the Druids, as was sometimes supposed, but existed at a far earlier period. As to whether it served as a temple, observatory, or political centre, opinion is still divided

STONEHENGE

STANDING IMMEMORIAL upon Salisbury Plain, eerie in mist or by moonlight, the massive stones are a magnet to visitors, who flock to the site from all over the world in such numbers that they now have to be kept at a distance from the monument itself. This fascination with Stonehenge is nothing new. It has been a place of mystery and awe for 5000 years, and the focus of hotly contested rival theories for centuries past. Back in the 13th century the chronicler Henry of Huntingdon wrote: 'Nor can anyone conceive by what art such great stones have been so raised, or why they were there constructed.' Modern archeology has successfully demonstrated how the stones were raised, with simple ramps and levers, but the purpose of the monument is still a matter of debate. It is likely to remain so and we are probably never going to know for sure why Stonehenge was built.

The monument itself stands at the heart of a complex of burial barrows and ritual sites. It was altered many times over a long history of construction, in which three main phases have been distinguished. The first began, perhaps about 3200 BC (new dating methods and discoveries keep shifting the date back earlier), with the construction of a 'henge' – an open-air enclosure surrounded by a bank of chalk and a ditch. Inside the bank was a ring of 56 pits, in which cremated human remains have been found. The pits are now called the Aubrey Holes after the 17th-century antiquarian John Aubrey, who discovered them. He imagined the Druids boiling up the flesh of their victims in kettles set in the holes. Other cremated bodies were buried in the ditch and inside the henge itself. The entrance to the henge was at the north-east, in the direction of the midsummer sunrise, and outside stood a large stone, the Heel Stone, 15ft high, which was probably the first stone placed here.

The second main phase, about a thousand years later, saw 82 blocks of bluestone, weighing some 4 tons each, brought to the site from the Preseli Hills in the far southwest of Wales (though there is an alternative theory that they had been moved across country long before by glacial action and were found nearer to Stonehenge by the builders). The bluestones were erected in a double circle inside the henge and an avenue was constructed to lead from the River Avon, almost 2 miles away, to the henge's entrance.

Presently, in the third main phase, about 2000 BC, the bluestones were removed and enormous blocks of sandstone – sarsens – weighing 25 to 50 tons apiece, were dragged to the site over the downs from about 20 miles away to the north. These were heaved up in a ring, joined across the top by massive lintels fastened on by mortise and tenon joints. Inside the ring, ten huge lintel-capped uprights were arranged in the shape of a horseshoe with five arches. The surfaces of the stones were smoothed and axes were carved on them. The whole work must have taken years and involved immense labour, and it is these massive 'trilithons' which constitute most people's lasting image of the site. The builders were people of the bronze-using Wessex culture, which had trading links with the Baltic, central Europe and the eastern Mediterranean.

It was later still, after about 1650 BC, that the monument reached its present form when the bluestones were brought back again. A bluestone horseshoe was placed inside the sarsen one and a circle of bluestones set inside the sarsen circle. The monument was still in use in 1100 BC, giving it an active life of more than 20 centuries – a huge span. Near it can still be seen the burial barrows of chieftains and aristocrats, suggesting that it was the Westminster Abbey of its time, to which important people were brought to be buried close to the sacred area.

The Druid Connection

Earlier generations, without the advantage of radiocarbon dating, did not realise either the immense antiquity of Stonehenge or the vast span of time during which it was repeatedly altered. Over the years the builders have been identified not merely as the Celts, the Phoenicians, the Romans, the Saxons or the Danes, but as Brahmins from India, ancient Egyptians or Chaldeans or, even more wildly, American Indians. More recent candidates include engineers from Atlantis or voyagers from outer space in flying saucers.

John Aubrey thought Stonehenge was a temple of the Druids. This enticing Druid connection has had a long run, though adamantly opposed by archeologists. They point out that Stonehenge is centuries too early and that all the evidence about the Druids has them conducting their ceremonies in groves of trees, not stone circles. The idea lingers on, even so, and it is possible that the Druids used the ruined circles of a much earlier age as temples – though there is no evidence for it – while the modern Druids still claim a proprietary interest in the site (see DRUIDS).

The 18th-century antiquary William Stukeley, who was a great Druid enthusiast, pointed out that the monument is oriented to the sunrise on Midsummer Day and early in this century a distinguished astronomer, Sir Norman Lockyer, suggested that Stonehenge and other prehistoric stone circles were aligned with the sun and other heavenly bodies, and were designed by priests who were also astronomers. After many years of determined resistance to the idea that the builders of Stonehenge could have possessed the necessary intellectual equipment, archeologists now generally accept that the monument was built, in part at least, as an astronomical observatory, though not of as sophisticated a kind as some enthusiasts have claimed. It was almost certainly also a temple and it may well have been a statement in stone of what its priests believed to be the order of the universe, intended magically to help keep that order safely in being (see MEGALITHIC MYSTERIES).

By Magic Art

Legend and folklore naturally gathered round the great stones. It was widely believed that they were the work of the Devil or of giants. According to Geoffrey of Monmouth in the 12th century, followed by many subsequent chroniclers, the colossal stones of the Giants' Ring or Giants' Dance came originally from Africa and far back in the past were taken to Ireland by giants. Merlin, the master enchanter, brought them from Ireland by a mixture of magic art and engineering skill and re-erected them on Salisbury Plain (see MERLIN). The monument was used as the honoured burying place of British kings and leaders.

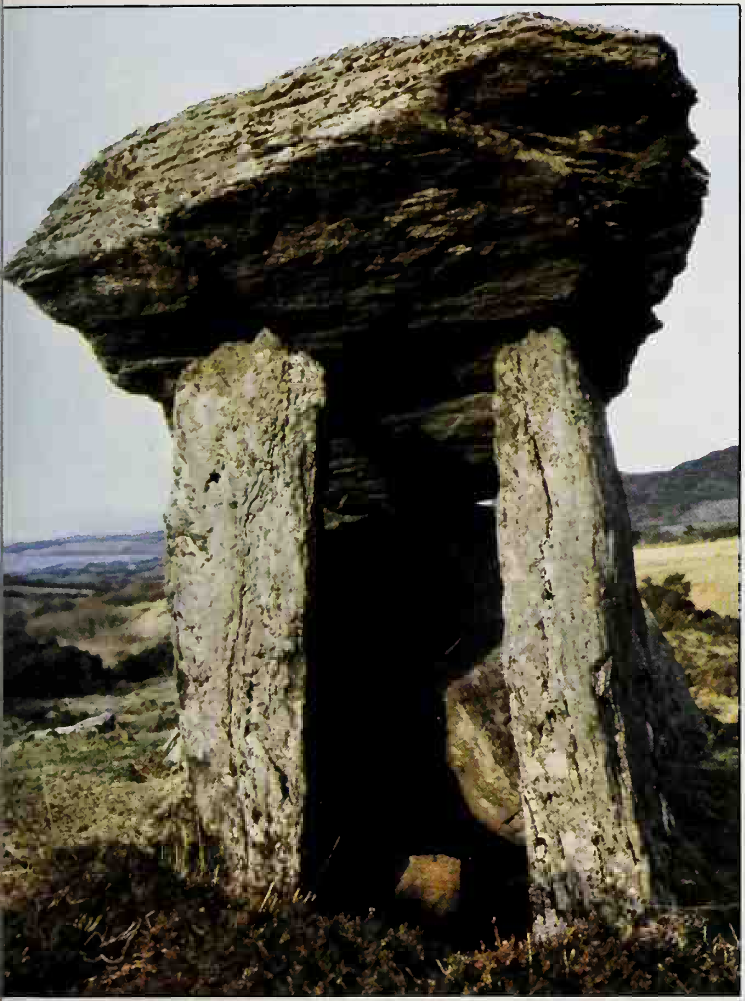
This may preserve a folk memory of the area as the burying ground of prehistoric chieftains, and perhaps also the tradition of the bluestones being brought by water from far away in the west. The bluestones were not in reality brought to Salisbury Plain from Ireland, but the area of Wales from which they did come was heavily populated by Irish immigrants in the early centuries AD, and this could have suggested an Irish connection.

Geoffrey of Monmouth's story also connects the stones with mysterious religious rites and credits them with magical healing power. He describes how water used to wash them was saved and employed to heal the sick and how herbs mixed with the water made an effective treatment for wounds. Belief in the magic power of the stones survived locally for centuries. It was still alive in John Aubrey's day, when bits of stone or powder from the stones were believed to drive noxious toads out of wells, and in 1707, when it was reported that scrapings from the stones would heal any wound.

Another persistent belief was that the stones could not be counted. There is a reference to this in the 16th century in a poem by Sir Philip Sidney, which says that eye could not count the number of stones nor reason discover how they were brought to the site. King Charles II spent some time at the scene counting and re-counting them in 1651, and Inigo Jones counted them with no difficulty, but the fable persisted, because people liked the aura of mystery which cloaked the site. They have continued to enjoy it ever since.

FURTHER READING: R. J. C. Atkinson, *Stonehenge* (Penguin, 1979); A. Burl, *The Stonehenge People* (Dent, 1987).

Stonehenge silhouetted against the sunset. Its awesomeness and immemorial antiquity have made it the focus of romantic legends, folklore and fantasy for centuries past.



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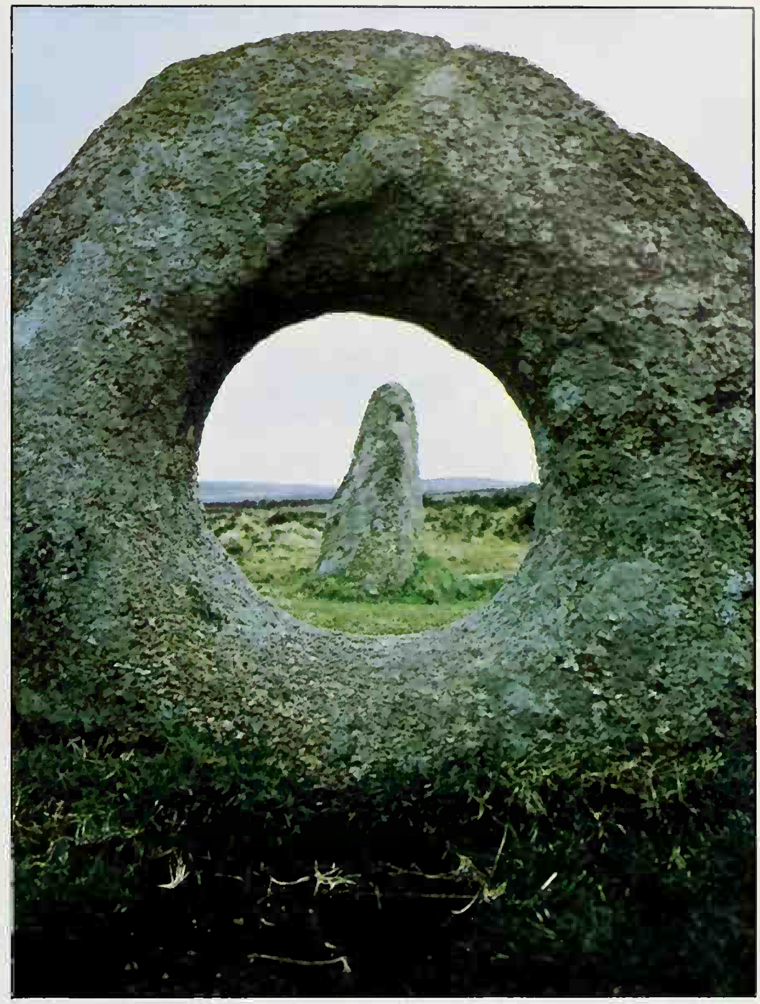


John Moss

Above left **Stone dolmen in County Donegal: these constructions of flat, unhewn stones resting horizontally across stone uprights are numerous in Celtic regions *Above right* Formation in Cornwall dating from 1600-1000 BC: stones with natural holes were taken to represent the female principle, and sick persons or barren women might be passed through the hole in a symbolic rebirth**

STONES

THE PRESENCE of pebbles, ordinary stones and chunks of unhewn rock in so much mythical and magical lore reflects humankind's willingness to find the supernatural in anything and everything. Demons in wild animals, gods in trees, magical power in lightning or eclipses are readily comprehensible. But it must be an overwhelming, all-consuming myth-making urge that puts spirits in mossy old boulders, magical power in a handful of gravel.

In man's earliest myth-making days the stone was often worshipped directly as a god in itself. Usually the object of such worship inspired awe because of its size, its odd shape or its colour. Pre-biblical Semitic peoples apparently practised stone-worship, as did tribes in parts of pre-Hellenic Greece, Crete and Thessaly. Stones have also been worshipped as gods in parts of Africa, and widely in India.

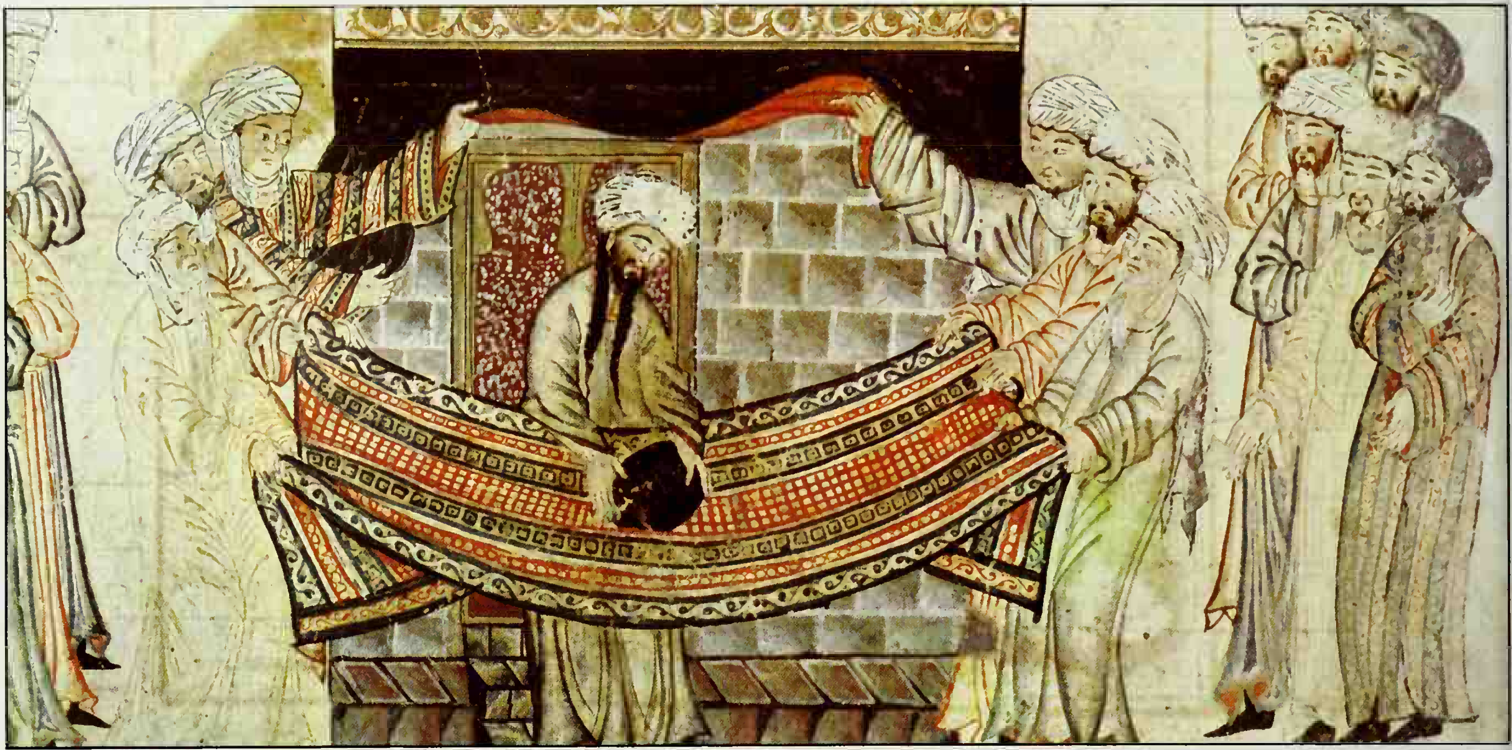
But sophistication of a sort usually overtook these cults fairly soon, and the stone ceased to be a god, becoming instead the abode of a god. The god in the stone, the natural stone, not the sculpted, is a worldwide phenomenon. The ancient Greeks devoted much of their religious attention to such stones, including those that were vaguely phallic in shape and associated with Apollo. The Greeks also set up their famous *hermae*, cairns of stones ascribed to Hermes (see HERMES), which partook of some of his divinity as god of travellers. These were placed on roadsides, on boundaries, and in later days on street corners and outside houses. And though they eventually developed into carved representations of the god, erect phallus and all, many were originally plain, unwrought, columnar rocks.

The boundary stones of the Babylonians, also, were often plain, columnar rocks, though the boundary-makers carved inscriptions on them, mostly warning anyone who might dare to shift a particular stone that an awful curse would descend from the god to whom it was dedicated. In much the same way, the Celts scraped semi-abstract representations of gods onto tall, upright monumental stones known as menhirs. But the Celts, along with many other peoples, also made much use of unadorned, natural standing stones, sometimes in groups, as at Stonehenge, or as in the great dolmens of Celtic regions. Stones were also used singly, frequently as grave markers. The idea of erecting a tombstone over a grave may possibly have arisen from the belief that the spirit of the dead person would inhabit the stone. What is now a memorial may have once been a spiritual abode (see BRITTANY; CULT OF THE DEAD).

The most primitive form of boundary or marker stone, still widely in use, was the cairn, which was built up at holy places and to which each traveller added another stone. The practice is found throughout Celtic regions of Europe, in the Middle East and Asia, and among Australian aborigines. The Celts dedicated many cairns to mountain gods on peaks and summits, believing that adding a stone magically swept away the traveller's weariness. Hikers and mountain-climbers still carry on the practice today, but as a pleasant tradition rather than a piece of magic or worship.

The 'god-in-the-stone' motif also occurs among North American Indians. Vast stones were worshipped by Plains tribes like the Sioux, Ojibwa and Canadian Cree, to whom, obviously, a solitary huge boulder on the empty face of the prairie would seem especially awesome. In the myths of these tribes, the great stones seem to be both dwelling places for special gods and almost ancestral spirit beings in their own right, as if they had not yet completed the transition from 'god-as-the-stone' to 'god-in-the-stone'.

The spirits in stones can often be lesser divinities, not much more than imps. Many old Irish and Welsh tales tell of stones that speak or move, usually on especially supernatural occasions, like Midsummer Eve, and there are moving stones in the folklore of France, Borneo, Central America and elsewhere. The Central American stones are shaped like jaguars; they are believed to



Mohammed, chosen by lot for this sacred task, reverently replaces the Black Stone in the repaired Kaaba: from a 14th-century Arabic MS

transform themselves into these animals at will. The Chukchansi Indians of California had a legend of a rock, about five feet high, that would grow, if anyone tried to jump it, just enough to scrape the jumper's backside. The belief that all stones increase in size is common to many peoples. According to an old American superstition, lightning aids this growing process.

The Holy Stone

In many parts of the world the concepts of the god-as-the-stone and the god-in-the-stone frequently develop into the belief that a particular stone is a sacred object merely because of some mythic association with supernatural powers. Perhaps the most famous example is the Black Stone of Islam, in the Kaaba at Mecca (see MECCA). It does not contain a god, but has traditional associations with God. Of course, as a meteorite it would be doubly venerable, as meteorites are considered to be extremely sacred in almost every mythology.

The Old Testament contains its share of sacred stones, like the one set up and anointed by Jacob at Bethel, after his dream of the ladder to heaven (Genesis, chapter 28). And Joshua set up a stone to mark the covenant he made with the people of Israel that they would forsake 'foreign gods' and serve the Lord (Joshua, chapter 24).

According to a Greek legend, the centre of the world was found by Zeus to be at Delphi, and was marked by the conical 'navel stone' called *omphalos* (see NAVEL). Its shape and site undoubtedly made it sacred to Apollo; and a variant of the myth states that the omphalos marked the grave of the sacred snake of an older religion, supplanted by the worship of Apollo.

With the movement away from the concept of the god-in-the-stone to that of the less divine sacred stone, men developed the idea of the altar: a sacred stone that still provided a way of access to the god, even if he no longer lived in it (see ALTAR). The Aztecs and Maya used vast stones, partly hewn, and grooved to catch blood, as altars for human sacrifice; and Norse saga mentions Thor's stone, a sacred rock on which men being sacrificed to the god had their backs broken.

Another famous stone, not strictly an altar but nevertheless a feature of holy occasions, is the Stone of Scone, on which the kings of Scotland were once crowned. Edward I carried it off to Westminster Abbey in the 13th century, where it forms part of the throne occupied by British monarchs at their coronation. A legend identifies the stone with the coronation stone of the old kings of Ireland. Known as the *Lia-fail*, it was said to shriek aloud whenever the rightful heir to the throne stepped on it.

Most sacred stones were believed to possess inherent magical powers and this is especially true of the chipped-flint tools of the Stone Age, when they were found in the fields of later peoples. Throughout Europe and much of the rest of the world these flint axes and arrowheads were thought to have dropped from the sky, or to have been hurled by the gods, and were called thunderstones. Naturally they were associated with Zeus or Jupiter in the Graeco-Roman world, and with Thor in Scandinavia, although some ancient Scandinavians apparently worshipped them directly, almost as household gods in their own right.

In North and South America the Indians venerated flint. The Cherokee, for instance, regarded this kind of stone as a god, as did the Quiche of Guatemala, for whom it was the fire god, because of its ability to create fire. The Pueblo Indians had flint societies among their numerous clans and secret cults; predictably, these groups were concerned with weather control and magic.

Throughout Europe, popular superstition assigned a protective role to the Stone Age implements, which were thought to guard against lightning, disease, witches or (in France) difficult childbirth. Europeans took these ideas about flint to the United States, where rural superstition says that a clean white flint will keep witches from a house, or hawks from the chickens. And rubbing with a flint cures goitre, if the stone is then returned to the spot where it was found.

Apart from flints, everything from vast granite blocks to plain pebbles can contain magical virtue. The Irish Blarney Stone confers eloquence on those who kiss it; a sacred stone in British Columbia needs only to be struck to cause rain for nearby Indian tribes; special stones in Scotland, Fiji, Greece and elsewhere bring storms if they are turned or set upright. In India standing stones with their phallic associations can be ritually used to cure barrenness in women, or to ensure easy childbirth.

Stones with natural holes (the female symbol) tend to be as prominent in magical lore as the upright phallic kind. Barren women, or any ill person, would be passed through the holes of large specimens, to undergo the curative power of a symbolic birth or rebirth. Pledges may be sealed with such stones when the participants clasp hands through the hole, as with Scotland's 'Plichtin (plighting) Stane o' Lairg'. Small stones with natural holes are worn as amulets the world over.

The ancient Japanese used sacred stones in a method of divination, based on their apparent weights when lifted in the hand. And some Central American Indians looked for the future in the face of smooth and naturally polished stones. This was an early form of mirror divination, and the stone was said to show the face of Death to anyone fated to die in the near future.

DOUGLAS HILL

Himself a model of domestic virtue, the stork is best known in folklore today as the bringer of new life to human households

STORK

TWO SPECIES of stork, the white and the black, breed in Europe, but folklore is concerned mainly with the white species, which is more conspicuous and bolder. In many parts of Europe, and in North Africa, it has adapted itself to living in close proximity to man and chooses to nest on houses, church towers and, in some places, cart-wheels that have been specially fixed on tall poles or heavily pruned tree trunks.

Although the white stork is practically voiceless, the clattering of its mandibles as it arches its neck over its back attracts attention. Ovid, Petronius and Dante are among the writers who mention this characteristic. The regularity of the bird's appearance in spring was noted in ancient times. Jeremiah commented: 'Even the stork in the heavens knows her times' (Jeremiah 8.7); while the Roman writer Pliny remarked that the birds' comings and goings were mysterious.

Legends tell of storks being transformed into human beings, possibly because the large size and upright posture suggest an affinity with mankind. Typical versions occur in Germany, where it is also said that a wounded stork weeps human tears and there are modern Greek and Arab stories relating that in the distant lands to which the birds go in autumn they live as men. As early as the 13th century, Gervase of Tilbury mentioned people who at times became transformed into storks. There is an Eastern legend of a man who managed to turn himself into a stork, and who found the birds' conversation so amusing that he forgot the formula by which to regain human form.

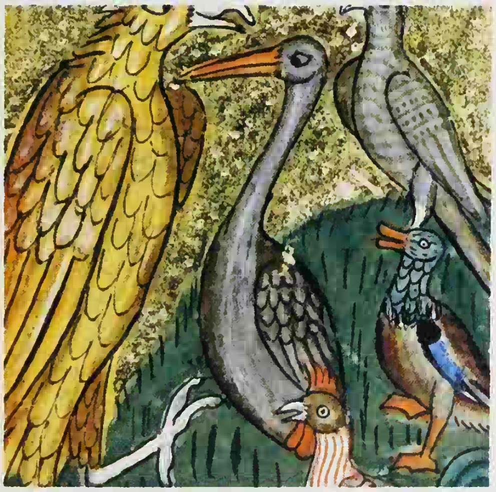
Filial Duty

During the Middle Ages writers quoted Aristotle to the effect that the male stork kills his mate if she is unfaithful, and Chaucer referred to it as 'the avenger of adultery'. In the 3rd century AD Aelian embroidered on this belief in a story about a stork who blinded a human adulterer in gratitude to the husband who had allowed it to nest on his house. From classical times the stork has had a reputation for filial piety. The young were said to care for their parents in old age. The English poet Michael Drayton (1563-1631) referred to the 'careful stork...in filial duty as instructing man'. In a Russian folktale an old man pleads with a stork to be his son.

The fable that the stork brings babies seems to be a fairly recent one and is most detailed in Germany. Bavarians say that baby boys of good disposition ride on the bird's back while naughty boys are carried in its bill. In some localities, if a Christmas mummer dressed as a stork nudges a woman or girl it is said that she will soon be pregnant. In Holland and Germany children sing to the stork to bring them a little brother or sister.

A number of ancient ideas may have contributed to the development of the baby-bringing theme. Its association with water connects the stork with fertility, it was the messenger of Athene, who in some places was associated with childbirth, and its old Germanic name, *Adebar*, means 'luck-bringer'.

The stork's bill is red and, in common with a number of other birds with red markings, it is associated with fire. A stork's nest on the house protects it from fire, although if its young are stolen it may set the building alight. Although it is generally regarded as a bringer of good fortune, there are localities where it is held to be an evil portent if a stork alights on a house. In other regions a wedding may be expected if this occurs.



A Welcome Guest

As an ambassador of spring the stork's arrival is greeted with a great variety of welcoming calls and songs. Predictions may be made from the birds' behaviour; for example, that when they arrive late in spring the season will be unfavourable. To see a white stork foretells a dry year, whereas a black one indicates that the coming months will be wet. An exceptional saying is that if storks circle over a group of people one of them will die shortly.

The kindliness with which the bird is generally viewed is probably due in part to the fact that certain types of storks kill small snakes. This is given as the reason why it was held in such great honour in ancient Thessaly that a man who killed a stork was treated as a murderer.

The stork has long been regarded as possessing valuable medicinal qualities. The bird's stomach was a remedy against murrain, an infectious disease in cattle. Its sinews were used to bind up a foot afflicted with gout, on the principle that a bird with legs so long and healthy must be capable of alleviating pain in human limbs. According to Jewish folk traditions, its gall may be used to cure scorpion stings.

The stork appears in Aesop's *Fables*, where we are told that the wolf swallowed a bone which stuck in its throat. He roamed around howling with pain and offering a generous reward to anyone who would help him. At last the stork undertook the task. Poking his long bill into the wolf's throat he extracted the bone. When he asked for the promised reward the wolf laughed and said: 'You should count yourself lucky that I did not bite your head off when it was in my mouth.' The moral is that kindness is not always requited.

In another fable a farmer catches a stork in a net with cranes and geese. The stork pleads that he only happened to be in the company of the other birds and was not stealing grain as they were, but the farmer tells him that as he was with thieves he must suffer the same punishment. In other words, be careful what company you keep.

E.A.ARMSTRONG

A length of string can serve as a link, while the function of a knot is to impede or make fast; man's ability to see occult meaning in everyday objects is typified by the symbolic importance of cord and knots in witchcraft, medicine and magic ancient and modern

STRING

THE NEED TO BIND and connect, to fasten and make secure, must have led man in very early times to produce forms of twine, thread and cord, which could be made firm by knotting. He needed line for fishing, thread for stitching and cord for rudimentary construction work, such as bridge-building, or lashing together the framework of log huts. And taking into account man's tendency to invest the familiar natural objects of the world around him with supernatural qualities, it is fairly easy to understand how thread, string and knots came to acquire their present symbolic meanings.

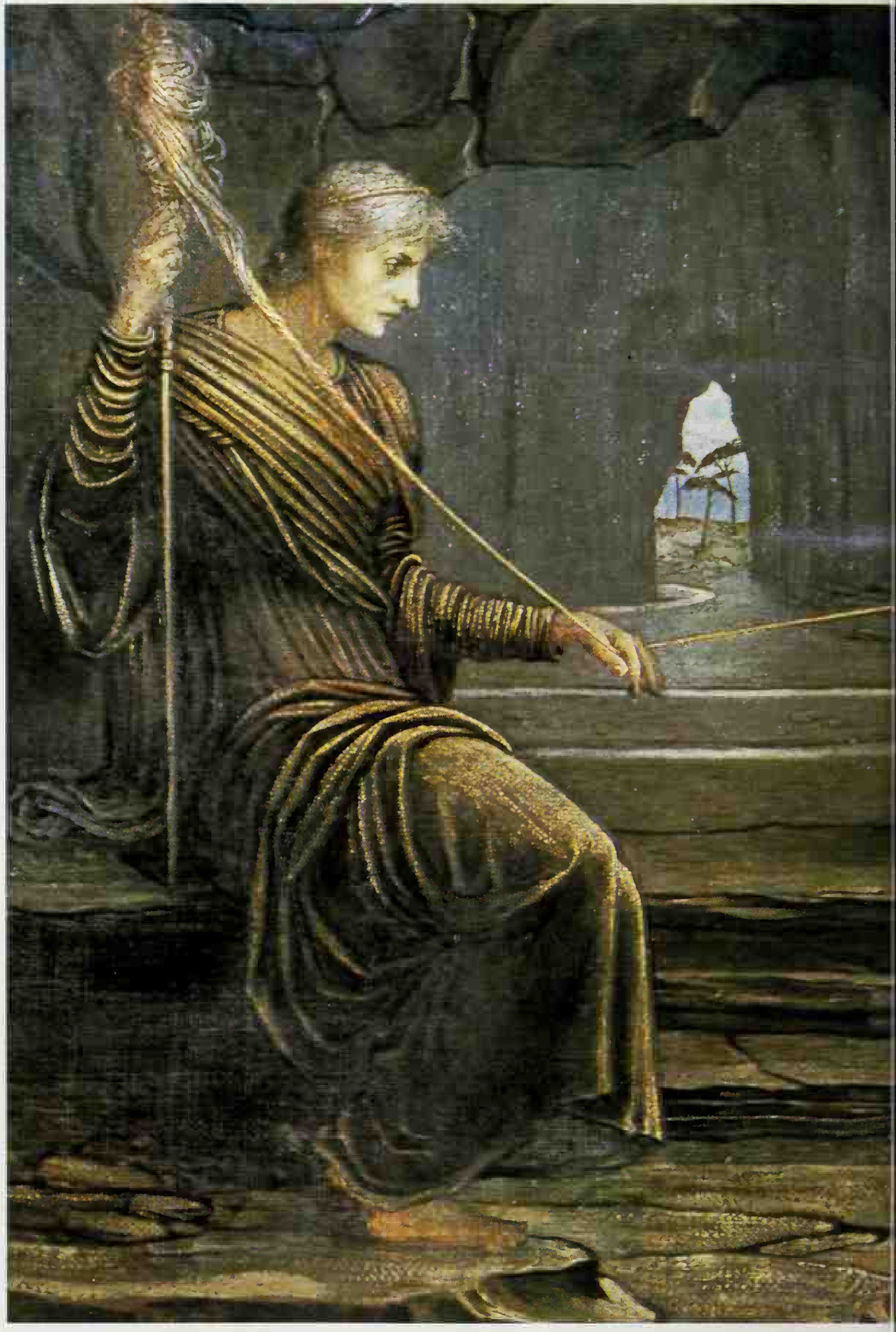
Thread is regarded as the connecting link between two separate planes of existence, and it is also connected with fate, as the thread of life. In classical mythology Clotho spins man's destiny, Lachesis weaves the web of luck or chance which sustains his life, and Atropos severs the thread when death comes (see FATE).

Thread was also linked with fate in Finno-Ugrian folklore, and it was the means by which the dead ascended to the otherworld; it was at one time placed in coffins for this purpose. There was also a custom in which the mourners participated in a kind of lottery of death, each picking a single thread. The one who drew the shortest was fated to die next.

In the interpretation of dreams, a tangled thread is said to represent trouble, and a broken one disaster. In the theatrical profession, many actors believe that it is very lucky to pick up a long thread from the floor, as this promises a long and successful production.

String possesses symbolic qualities closely akin to those of thread. It represents the line of continuity and is used when making a magic circle, and to bind individuals with unbreakable spells. As a medical amulet it protects against sterility and death.

Making string figures (such as 'cat's cradles') is a popular game among children, and in primitive communities all over the world, and these pastimes often possess magical overtones. In the Far East, ghost traps made from string are sometimes set on the outskirts of villages to ensnare prowling spectres.



The Power to Bind

The bulk of the lore relating to string and thread is concerned with knots, which represent tightly closed links, and have many psychic implications that arise from the fact that, in magic, that which has the power to bind the body can also be used to confine the spirit. The knot is also the symbol of the sealed bargain. The continuous knot in the form of a horizontal figure eight represents infinity.

The Gordian knot which was wrought so intricately that no one could undo it – until Alexander cut it with his sword (see SWORD) and thus became conqueror of the East – also had an occult significance. It stood as a symbol of the labyrinth, and it was said that to untie the knot to its heart was equivalent to finding the centre which formed such an important part of mystic thought. In certain religious orders and secret societies, ceremonies involving knotting and binding take place during the initiation of a new member, as in the case of high-caste Brahmins and, in the past, the Knights Templar. Modern witches use cords and knots in many rituals: for example, cord of a given planetary colour may bind an image in a restraining spell, or a knot may be tied as a focus of concentrated will in a healing spell.

Closely associated with the knotting of cords or garments, are a number of religious taboos. The *flamen Dialis*, the Roman priest of Jupiter (see JUPITER), was forbidden to have a single knot in his clothing; and Moslem pilgrims to Mecca are prohibited from wearing knots and rings. It has been suggested that the origin of the phrase 'the bonds of matrimony' is the custom of draping the priest's stole over the clasped hands of the bride and groom to form a symbolic knot. In former times, knotted ribbons were often worn at weddings to symbolize the binding effect of the marriage ceremony as well as for their decorative value.

Love, Birth and Death

A girl who used illicit love magic in an attempt to lure a reluctant lover into her clutches would tie knots in lengths of thread or wool, at the same time chanting:

> This knot I knit,
> This knot I tie,
> To see my lover as he goes by,
> In his apparel and array,
> As he walks in every day.

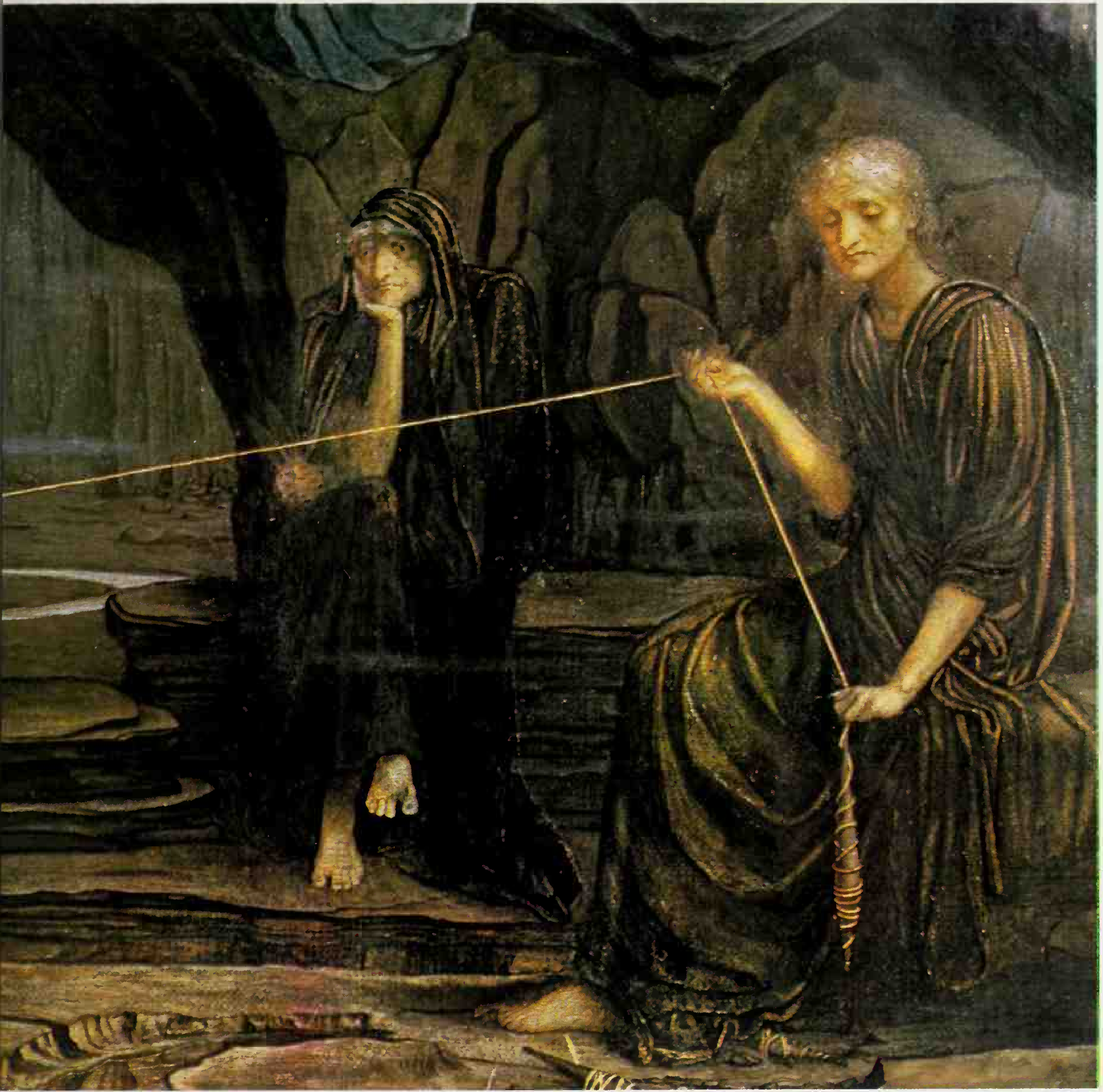
The symbol of fidelity and love, the love-knot, is a double knot of ribbon with two bows, and two ends.

One of the arts of the Age of Chivalry was point-tying, a method of inhibiting the sexual prowess of a husband on his wedding night by artfully tying a knot in his points, the tagged lace or cord that attached his hose to his doublet. Similarly, tying a knot in a length of thread or string was popularly supposed to render a man sexually incapable. If the knot were not discovered, the condition of impotence could be permanent. This practice, which savoured of black magic, was greatly frowned upon by the Church.

Tying knots to avoid an unwanted pregnancy was at one time practised by both men and women. A Moroccan husband would knot and then swallow the oviduct of a hen, while in eastern Europe a woman would tie ten knots in a length of flax which she would wear for nine successive days and nights before burying it.

During the Renaissance churchmen were often horrified by the superstitious practices associated with childbirth; in 1584, for instance, in Shropshire, the prevailing custom of unlocking all the doors and loosening every knot in the house in order to ease the mother's labour was roundly condemned. This curious custom persisted in some rural districts of Britain until less than a century ago.

Because untying knots was supposed to facilitate childbirth it seemed perfectly logical to ascribe difficult births to the malicious tying of knots by an enemy of the mother concerned. As a result of this reasoning, a great number of so-called witches ended their lives on the gallows or at the stake, having 'freely' confessed under torture to the crime of inhibiting childbirth.



Tate Gallery/John Webb

Clotho spins the thread of human life, Lachesis measures its length and Atropos waits to cut it at the last: the three Fates, in a detail from a painting by John Melhuish Strudwick, *The Golden Thread*

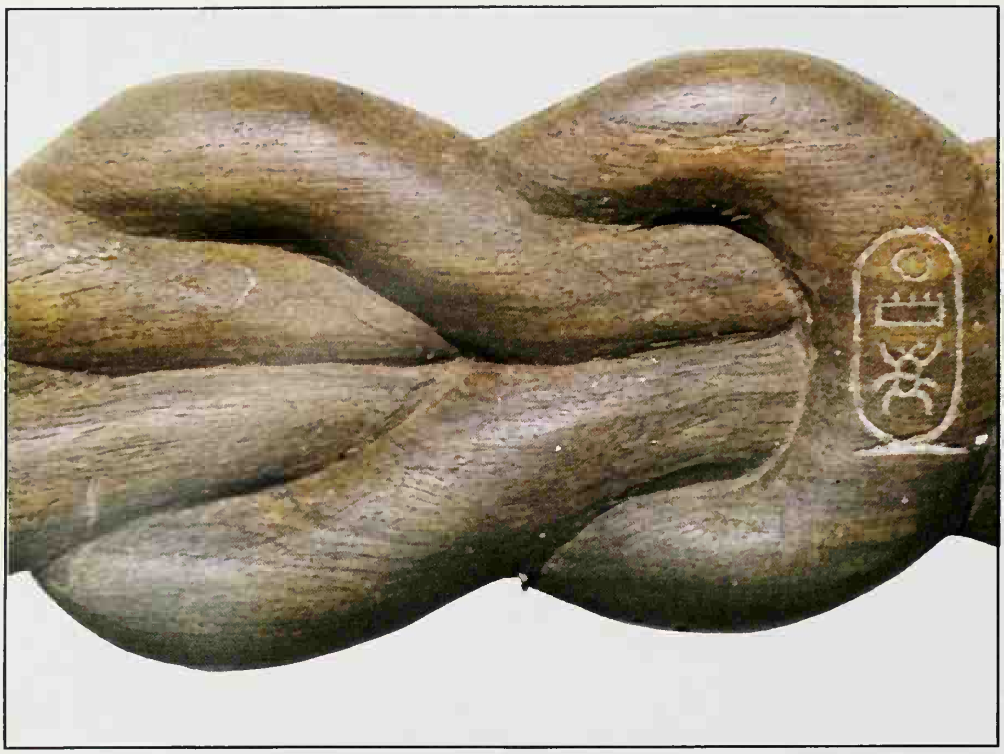
Knots have been used in the magical treatment of disease from ancient times to the middle years of the 19th century. A well-known country remedy for nose bleeding was to tie a skein of red silk, which had previously been knotted by nine maidens, around the neck of the sufferer. The mystical number nine occurs yet again in the once popular cure for whooping cough, in which a string with nine knots was worn as a neckband. A well-known treatment for warts was to knot a piece of string and then bury it in the earth. It was said that the wart would disappear as the string rotted. In ancient Babylon, 4000 years ago, a threefold cord with twice seven knots was said to cure headaches if it was tied round the brow.

Before the development of sedative drugs a protracted death could impose an intolerable burden upon both the dying person and his family and, understandably, every legitimate method of hastening the inevitable end was explored. Every door in the house was unlocked, all windows were opened and all knots loosened to clear a way of exit for the departing soul. The relief that members of a family felt when death had finally claimed its victim often resulted in agonies of guilt, and these led, perhaps inevitably, to a growing fear that the angry ghost would return. To insure against this happening, a piece of knotted thread or string would be carried in a pocket to serve as an antidote. A holed stone suspended from the ceiling by a thread with nine knots was said to give protection against nightmares.

In Scotland, fishermen use knotted thread and string, in various different colours, as charms. Red thread is said to be the most effective, particularly when used in conjunction with a piece of rowan or mountain ash (see RED; ROWAN). There was an old saying:

Rowan tree and red thread
Will put the witches to their speed.

This charm was believed to be effective only if the thread had been knotted by an



C. M. Dixon

Axel Poignant

Above **'The continuous knot in the form of a horizontal figure eight represents infinity': magical knot inscribed with the name of Pharaoh Tuthmosis III, dated c 1460 BC**

Below **Games with string are popular all over the world, sometimes carrying magical or religious overtones: Maori woman teaches her grandsons how to make the two volcanoes of the central highlands of North Island**

individual 'having the knowledge'.

Even the most innocent forms of magical knot-tying could involve great dangers in 17th-century Scotland, where all supernatural practices were constantly scrutinized by the clergy. Margaret Barclay, one of the witches of the town of Irvine in Ayrshire, was put to torture solely on the evidence provided by a length of knotted red thread and a twig of rowan which she carried as a protective charm.

Witches were reputed to be able to steal the milk of cows, from a distance, by plaiting, or tying magical knots, and Isabel Gowdie (see GOWDIE), the Scottish witch, confessed to this crime. She declared: 'We plait the rope the wrong way [widdershins] in the Devil's name and thereby take with us the cow's milk.'

As recently as the 1870s Scottish farmers attempted to protect their stock against bewitchment by threading red cord through one of the ears of each new cow when it first entered the byre.

At a Rate of Knots

One of the best-known arts of the sea witches of Finland, the Orkneys and the Isle of Man was that of controlling the wind by means of magical knots. Three knots were to be tied in a length of string, and as each was undone the power of the wind increased. It was said of the women of the Isle of Man, especially those on the coast, that they would 'selle to shipmen wynde so it were closed under three knotes of thread, so that the more wynde he would have the more knotes he must undo'.

The last surviving relic of the ritual tying of knots is possibly the ornamental intertwining of cords known as knotwork, an art which was popular in Britain towards the end of the last century, and which, under the name of macrame, has recently enjoyed a revival of popularity in Europe and the United States.

ERIC MAPLE

SUBTERRANEAN RACES

AN ANCIENT PERUVIAN legend relates that four brothers and four sisters emerged from the cavern of Pacari-Tambo, east of Cuzco, the ancient city that became the capital of the Inca Empire. The eldest brother climbed a mountain and, throwing stones to the four cardinal points, took possession of the land. The youngest brother, Ayar Uchu Topa, contrived to dispose of his elders, married the sisters, and subdued the surrounding peoples, founding Cuzco and many other cities.

The great Mammoth Cave in Edmondson County, Kentucky, was discovered only in 1809. Bodies of an unknown race reputed to antedate the Indians were found in its recesses with reed torches beside them, but all crumbled to powder when touched.

There is a belief that a low type of subterranean being sometimes appears in astral form on the earth's surface, attracted by manifestations of the human sex-force. For example, in *Real Ghost Stories*, W. T. Stead tells of an apparition seen by a woman in an English suburb: 'I saw this light develop into a head and face of yellowish-green light, with a mass of matted hair above it. The face was very wide and broad, larger than ours in all respects, very large eyes of green which, not being distinctly outlined, appeared to merge into the yellow of the cheeks; no hair whatever on the lower part of the face. The expression was diabolically malignant.'

One of the most interesting accounts of subterranean people, which purports in one sense to be factual, is by the Theosophist C. W. Leadbeater. Although he claimed to have up-to-date confirmation of some of the facts, his story is allegedly a report of the experience of two Indian youths, which took place in 10,402 BC and was recovered from the 'memory of Nature' (the record of history supposed to exist on the astral plane).

Both young men had some psychic faculty, and one heard a voice, from time to time, which guided him and suggested interesting enterprises. On the instructions of this invisible guide, who demanded a pledge of secrecy, they set out to a certain mountain area where they ultimately found a cave entrance. They prepared food packages to last several weeks and bundles of torches and, with some trepidation, entered.

After a long, fairly level, penetration into the mountain, they reached a sloping rugged downward fissure, which they descended perilously for some days. Finally they reached an immense cavity in the earth. Their torches were unnecessary there, because the air around them was charged with a strange luminosity.

They found underground rivers, several varieties of vegetation (which lacked the green of the upper earth), semi-reptilian animals and, to their astonishment, naked humans. These were of less than normal stature, but broad and stocky, and their skin had a repulsive leaden hue. They had no culture and no shelters, catching the reptiles to eat raw. They also fed on an abundant huge toadstool-like fungus.

The youths declined the reptile flesh, but found the fungus good and invigorating. After a week or so their unseen guide directed them to walk away from the wall where they had entered. After some hours, they came upon a different type of people, of higher intelligence. Although ignorant of fire, like the primitives already seen, they availed themselves of hot springs to cook the flesh of turtles and goat-like animals that they kept, and drank the animals' milk. They lived in chambers hollowed out in the rock, and wove a kind of matting and string from reeds. Both sexes smeared themselves with rose, green and yellow mud from the edges of the hot springs.

They were able to draw, and incised meaningful sets of marks on the rocks. These were mainly cup-markings, rounded hollows ground on the surface and arranged in patterns, each pattern having a meaning – in other words, they were ideographs. A certain number of these in a straight line had one meaning, a set making an angle had another. The two young explorers eventually found their way back to the entrance of the cave. (See also LYTTON.)

C. NELSON STEWART*

SUBUD

WHEN GURDJIEFF died in 1949 his work was carried on by several groups throughout the world, but there was no acknowledged inspirational leader (see GURDJIEFF). His successor was finally announced, however, in a curiously tangential manner: when John Bennett (who ran the Gurdjieffian school just outside London) visited Damascus in 1955, he had a meeting with a local holy man who told him: 'A Messenger is already on earth... before long he will come to the West... you are one of those chosen to prepare the way.'

That Messenger was Subuh, a humble book-keeper from Semarang in Indonesia. Born in 1901, sickly and puny, he seemed destined for an early grave. A stranger passing the child's home, and hearing the distress over his condition, said this would change if he was renamed 'Muhammad'. As they had little to lose, his parents did this – and the child flourished.

He soon showed signs of psychic ability, announcing that a newly-married couple would separate within a year. When this prophecy was fulfilled, he was (not unnaturally) kept away from further wedding ceremonies. As he grew older several fortunetellers told him that he would die by the age of 32, so he began to seek out spiritual teachers who would enlighten him about the meaning of this fate. Finally one Shelkh Abdurrahman, a dervish, informed him that the enlightenment he sought would not come from any holy man, but from a source outside the human race.

It came in 1925 in the form of a blinding light 'resembling the sun' which blotted out the moonless night sky. When this ball of light came down and touched Muhammad Subuh on the head he was immediately convulsed. For the next 'one thousand nights' he was visited by psychic experiences, including visions and moments of inner illumination, although he was able to carry on a normal life in all other respects. When he was 31 an inner voice told him to retire from all material concerns, and a year later, when he had reached the age at which it had been prophesied he would die, he was told that 'the wealth of power and illumination which had been given to him... must be freely handed on to all who asked for aid.' From then on, Subuh initiated many others into receiving, and in turn passing on, the 'spiritual current' he had been given.

Gurdjieff had taught his followers to achieve mastery over themselves through a system of physical and spiritual exercises, and Subud follows in this tradition. It is not a religion, nor a philosophy, but a complete and practical system for awakening one's inherent god-like abilities. The word 'Subud' is derived from the Sanskrit words *sushila*, 'right living according to the will of God', *budhi*, 'inner force', and *dharma*, 'submission to God'. Subud teaches that one's inner life can be dramatically changed by the discovery of, and adherence to, the dictates of one's higher self. In one who has achieved an awareness of this soul power the outer, everyday life will also change dramatically: they will be capable of 'miracles' such as healing, and the barriers between the seen and unseen worlds will be removed.

Muhammad Subuh initiated others with what he called the 'opening', which is often described as an 'electrical current' or 'vibration' – a blissful sense of open-ended consciousness and the cessation of all restless mental striving. In this it resembles other systems such as transcendental meditation, although few other disciplines promise such a dramatic shift of consciousness. Those on the path of Subud undergo a form of spiritual training called the 'latihan' which brings a balance between conscious and unconscious power and a means of developing that potential with immediate effect.

One of the more famous followers of Subud is the actress Eva Bartok, who was cured of severe abdominal pain in 1957 by the techniques taught in the latihan. She said later 'I felt as if my old self had died, being replaced by something new and alive.'

Edward van Hien, in his *What is Subud?*, says there is no strict teaching in Subud, but 'a fact which works and grows and goes on by itself... our hearts change, our characters change, our physical health changes, and what was wrong in us is put right – all this is the working of a powerful force of life, which cannot be known by our ordinary instruments and organs of perception.'

Never intended to be a mass cult, Subud continues to thrive quietly, content to pass on its secrets to those whose motives are pure and who are ready to receive them.

Sufism is a concentrated essence which for the majority needs diluting; yet paradoxically, its most remarkable quality is a universality which bridges East and West

SUFIS

JUST AS the Cabalists are the mystics of Judaism, the Sufis are the mystics of Islam. The Sufi orders fulfil in Islam something of the same function as that of the monastic orders in Christianity. They differ from the Christian orders in not being celibate, in not being under the control of any outside authority, and in not being so highly organized. They nevertheless have a certain organization, and many of them have accumulated rich endowments with the passage of the centuries, nearly always including a mosque which has in it the tomb of the saint who founded the order.

As in other religions, the mystical orders of Islam appear to have originated in groups which gathered spontaneously round some person of outstanding spirituality. One of the earliest of these guides was the Prophet Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law, Ali (d. 661), the fourth caliph. All the orders trace their spiritual ancestry back to Mohammed himself, and in most of these 'chains' Ali is the ultimate link, though one or two orders are descended from the Prophet through Abu Bakr, the first caliph (d. 634). By the end of the 9th century some of these groups had become organized brotherhoods, and the term 'Sufi', which was not used at the beginning of Islam, had become current. Junayd of Baghdad (d. 910) is a landmark of this early period and most of the Sufi masters are his spiritual descendants, whence his title 'the Sheikh of the Sheikhs'.

Sufi means 'wearer of wool', and long before the beginning of Islam woollen dress had been associated with the spiritual life. But the Sufis have not made a speciality of wearing wool. The term, which has venerable implications, was no doubt first applied to a particular group, spreading subsequently into a more general use.

The Sufis refer to themselves however as *fuqara*, 'poor (in Spirit)', plural of *faqir*, in Persian *darvish*, whence the English words 'fakir' and 'dervish' (see FAKIR; DERVISH).

The Koran affirms that the community of Mohammed is 'a middle people' and it is, above all, in its mysticism that his religion shows itself as a bridge between East and West. A Vedantist, a Taoist or a Buddhist can find, in many aspects of Islamic mysticism, 'a home from home', such as he could less easily find in Christianity or Judaism. Prince Dara Shikoh (d. 1659), the Sufi son of the Mogul Emperor Shah Jahan, was able to affirm that the only difference between Sufism and Advaita Vedantism is one of terminology. But this universality of Sufism cannot be attributed to any influences outside Islam. The foundations of Islamic mysticism were laid, and its subsequent course irrevocably fixed, long before it would have been possible for any farther Eastern or even Neoplatonic influences to have introduced non-Islamic elements, and when such influences came they touched no more than the surface. The universality of Sufism must be attributed in a large measure to the fact that in Islam, from the very beginning, a clear distinction is made between exoterism and esoterism. The majority are provided for by a well defined legal minimum, and esoterism is left free to devote itself to the needs of the few, absolved from any duty to stretch beyond measure the mystical net in order to find room for as many adherents as possible. The Sufis have always concentrated on the highest doctrinal truths and on the practices which correspond to them; and what is highest in religion is at the same time what is most universal.

Flash of Absolute Truth

The doctrine of Sufism, like that of Islam as a whole, is summed up in the formula of testification 'there is no god but God' which every entrant into Islam must pronounce. The Supreme Name *Allah*, 'God', is not to be separated from the Name *Haqq*, 'Truth, Reality', so that the above formula means also 'there is no reality but Reality'. Every Moslem must believe this, but only the Sufis take this belief to its ultimate conclusion. Reality, according to them, is that which *is*, and if only God is absolutely Real, only God *is*, whence the term 'oneness of being' by which the doctrine of Sufism is known and which is none other than the *Advaita* (non-duality) of Hinduism.

This does not mean that God is made up of parts, but that the whole created universe in all its seemingly incalculable multiplicity is mysteriously one substance with the Transcendent Infinite. The Sufi Abd al-Karim al-Jili (d. c 1428) used the image of ice and water to denote respectively the illusory world of coagulated forms and the Reality which is its Origin and End. Other Sufis use the image of the waves of the ocean which symbolize form and vicissitude while never being really separate from the ocean into which they are bound to subside. The Koran formulates this doctrine as follows, indicating at the same time that it is not within the scope of everyone: 'Verily We created the heavens and the earth with naught but Truth, yet most men know not' (Sura 44.39). On other occasions also the Absolute Truth suddenly flashes out of the Koranic text, as for example in the verses: 'Wheresoe'er ye turn, there is the Face of God' (Sura 2.115); and 'He (God) is the First and the Last and the Outwardly Manifest and the Inwardly Hidden' (Sura 57.3); and 'We (God) are nearer to him (man) than his jugular vein' (Sura 50.16). In connection with this last verse we may quote the saying of the Prophet: 'Who knoweth himself knoweth his Lord'. Also relevant is another of his sayings, of the kind that is known as a 'Holy Tradition', because in it God speaks in the first person: 'I was a Hidden Treasure and I wished to be known and so I created the world'. These two Traditions form the basis of some of the profoundest writing of Ibn Arabi (see IBN ARABI).

The Sufis are unanimous in considering the Prophet Mohammed to have been not only the first Sufi (in all but name) but also the first and incomparably the greatest master of Sufism. The main practices of the Sufis were all instituted by him; the differences between the orders are for the most part differences of choice, by the founders of the orders, from the wide range of possibilities offered by his own example. The whole of Sufism – its means and its end – is summed up in another Tradition: 'Nothing is more pleasing to Me, as a means for my slave to draw near unto Me, than the worship that I have made binding upon him; and My slave ceaseth not to draw near unto Me by devotions of his free will until I love him; and when I love him I am the hearing whereby he heareth and the sight whereby he seeth and the hand wherewith he smiteth and the foot whereon he walketh.'

The opening part of this Tradition refers to practices that are often called the 'five pillars of Islam' (see ISLAM). The voluntary practices referred to in the second part are drawn from what was recommended by the Prophet and they consist of reciting the Koran, extra prayers, fasts and pilgrimages, litanies, vigils, spiritual retreats and, as a complement to these solitudes, organized gatherings for the purpose of communal glorification and invocation. It is at these gatherings that in some Sufi orders a sacred dance is performed, as a means of inducing concentration, the most elaborate and celebrated of these being that of 'the whirling dervishes' originated by Rumi, the founder of the Mevlevi Order (see RUMI).

The most basic rite of Sufism is the invocation of the name Allah, which was enjoined upon the Prophet in one of the first Koranic revelations. There might seem to be a contradiction between the opening of the last quoted Tradition, which sets the obligatory before the voluntary, and a verse of the Koran (Sura 29.45) exalting the invocation of Allah, which is voluntary, above the five daily prayers, which are obligatory. The question is resolved for the Sufis on the understanding that the invocation, in itself the most powerful of all rites, is only acceptable to God on the basis of the invoker's having performed what is obligatory.

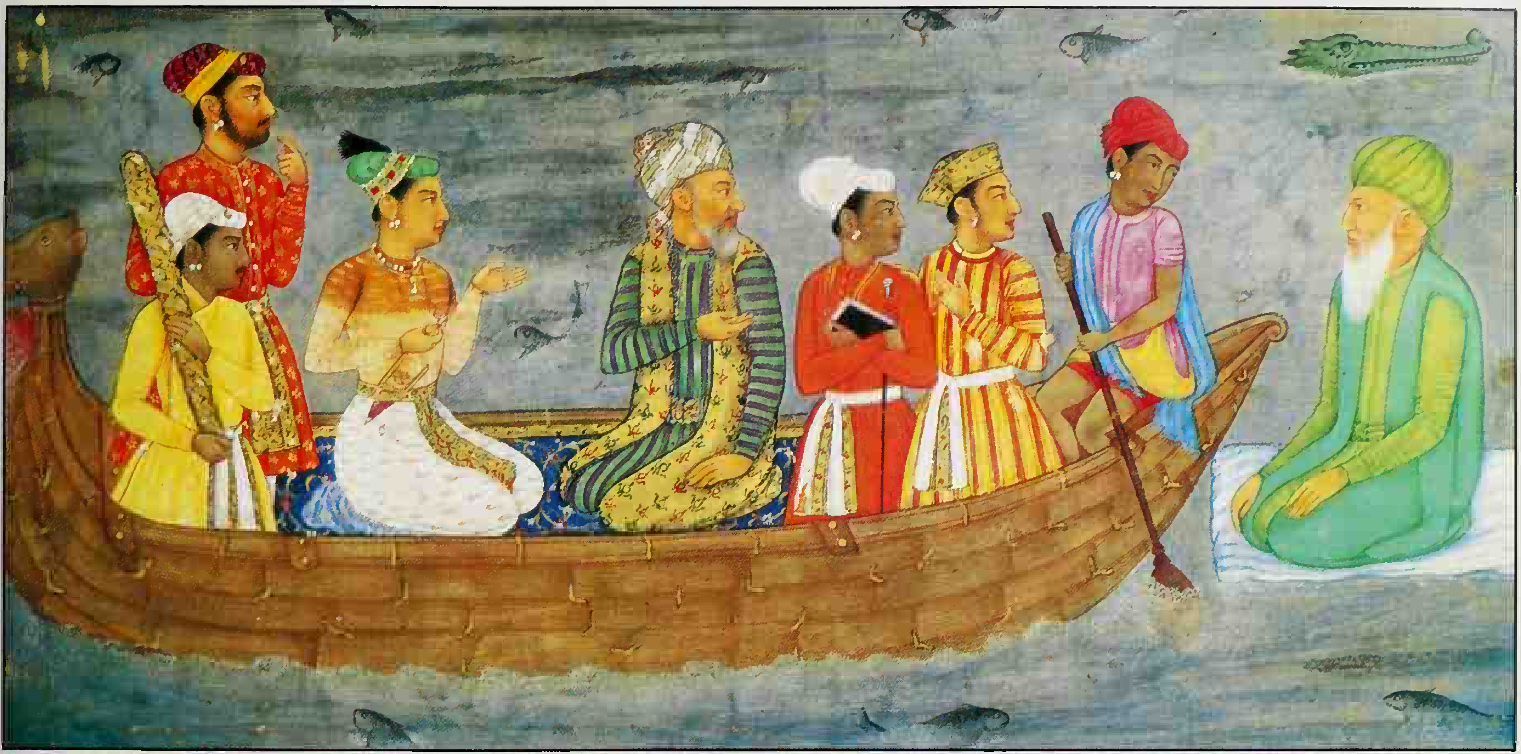
The first thing done with a novice in a Sufi order is to make sure that he is regular in his practice of what is binding on all Moslems. In this connection it may be remarked that the Sufis altogether disown those pseudo-Sufi movements in the modern world which profess to have made Sufism independent of Islam. The claim to be a Sufi without being a Moslem is on a level with claiming to be a Franciscan or a Dominican without being a Christian.

In the Sight of God

The dimension of depth which Sufism represents in Islam was indicated by the Prophet in his definition of the religion as a whole when, in addition to what must be believed and what ritually accomplished, he mentioned a third aspect of the religion which, by its very nature, is beyond the reach of the majority, namely, being an adept as regards faith and practice: 'Excellence is that thou shouldst worship God as if thou sawest Him; and if thou seest Him not, He seeth thee.' This definition, which is one of the foundation stones of Sufism, has always marked an ideal for the Sufis and is quoted again and again in their writings.

The difference between the Sufis and the majority of Moslems is not so much in what they do but how they do it. The prostration, for example, which is a gesture of humility before God, means for the Sufi no less than extinction, a ritual affirmation that there is no room in the Divine Presence for more than the One. The fast is another mode of extinction, 'abstaining from other than God', the ablution yet another, for it enacts the washing away of the impurity of the illusion that one exists apart from God. In this connection we may quote the saying of Rabiah (d. 801), one of the greatest women saints of Islam, who replied to a man who asked for her spiritual advice, saying that he had not sinned for 20 years: 'Alas, my son, thine existence is a sin wherewith no other sin may be compared.' It is only through extinction that the end of the path can be reached; in other words, it is only through emptiness that the receptacle can be flooded with the Divine Consciousness in the sense of the words: 'I am the hearing wherewith he heareth and the sight wherewith he seeth.' The Sufi does not conceive of the beatific vision as anything other than vision of God by God.

Sufism is a concentrated essence which for the majority needs diluting – hence the Koranic distinction between 'the slaves of God' (the word slave here implies extinction) and 'the righteous'. The slaves drink directly from the fountains of Paradise, whereas the righteous drink a draught which is flavoured at those fountains. Sufism, like all mysticisms, is both dangerous and necessary – as necessary to its religion as the heart is to the body. It is both closed and open; the Sufis are continually cleaving chasms, as it were, between themselves and the rest of the community, and building bridges. The relationship between Islamic esoterism and exoterism is both complex



British Museum

A Sufi saint, refused a passage on the ferry, calmly seated himself upon his prayer-mat and floated across the river in the boat's wake: a Persian miniature depicts the incident

and delicate, for if the Sufi orders are closed, requiring a rite of initiation for entry, their practices are in principle open to the community as a whole, even those which, in consequence of their power, are virtually dangerous.

But the power – and therefore the danger – of mystical practices depends partly on their methodical performance with the implacable regularity of a drumbeat, whence the insistence of the Sheikhs on patience and perseverance to a degree which far surpasses the average conception of these virtues. An unqualified person is normally protected from danger by the mediocrity of his practice, the danger in question being that a psychic substance which is caught up on the hook of some hidden or half-hidden egoism will be ruptured by a pull that is too sudden or too sharp. It is part of the function of a Sheikh to protect his disciples in this respect. A true master will know how much strain each soul is capable of taking.

The Wings of Poetry

Heralding as it were the exclusive aspect of Sufism, Abu Hurayrah (d. 678), one of the Companions of the Prophet, said: 'I have treasured in my memory two stores of knowledge which I had from the Messenger of God. One I have divulged; but if I divulged the other ye would cut my throat.' In connection with this aspect of Sufism, mention must be made of the inspired ejaculations which have always been characteristic of the Sufis such as the 'Glory be to Me!' of Abu Yazid al-Bistami (d. 874), sword thrusts which may bring about a sudden opening up of new horizons in the intelligences not only of disciples but also of those hearers who, unknown to themselves, have a vocation for the mystic path. But for those who have not, namely the vast majority, such ejaculations are liable to cause scandal, especially when repeated out of context and 'in cold blood'. No doubt the most famous of them is Hallaj's 'I am the Truth', for which, in 922, he was put to death.

Apart from such ejaculations and kindred aphorisms, many of the most profound formulations of the Sufis are in their poetry. Rumi is generally recognized as the greatest of Persian poets, and his contemporary, the Egyptian Umar ibn al-Farid (d. 1235) is certainly one of the greatest of the Arab poets. For the more uncompromising of their utterances formal beauty serves as a cloak and also lends wings to bridge chasms which could not otherwise be crossed. It is unlikely that Hallaj would have been put to death for his poem which begins:

> I saw my Lord with the eye of the heart.
> I said: Who art Thou? He answered:
> Thou.

Many of the Sufi poems take the form of love lyrics. Sometimes God is addressed directly, but often the Divinity is personified by a woman, usually named Laila which, in addition to being the name of the heroine of the best-known love story of the Near East, has the meaning of 'night', indicating that it is the holiest and most secret inwardness of God, the Divine Essence Itself, which marks the end of the Sufi path.

Of the Sufi treatises, some are written by the Sheikhs exclusively for their most intimate disciples, while others are written for a much wider circle of readers; and this brings us to what might be called the inclusive aspect of Sufism, the overflow of which into the outer domains of Islam is especially incarnated in Sufis who, in addition to their esoteric function, have been eminent exoteric authorities in ritual law or dogmatic theology. Amongst the most famous of these is Ghazali (see GHAZALI). In response to this 'overflow', almost every great order has at its fringe a multitude of men and women who would not be capable of following the Sufi path but who seek blessings from the Sheikh and also his guidance as regards voluntary worship. Such guidance often takes the form of a litany, long or short as the case may be, to be recited once or twice a day; but from humbler aspirants a Sheikh may simply demand that they make a solemn pact with him to perform regularly, until their dying day, all their ritual obligations.

Sufism Today

In connection with this aspect of Sufism it must be remembered also that visits to the tombs of saints play a large part in the spiritual life of the Islamic community as a whole, and apart from the tombs of the Prophet, his close companions, and some of his family, by far the most venerated tombs in Islam are those of the Sufi Sheikhs. In fact almost every community in the Islamic world has as its patron saint a Sufi who lies buried in its midst.

It is partly because of this that Sufism is banned by the puritanical Wahhabi sect which rules Saudi Arabia. Even prolonged visits to the tomb of the Prophet at Medina are frowned on, for fear lest some element of worship might be given to other than God. They cannot, however, prevent Sufis from making the pilgrimage, and in consequence Mecca and Medina are meeting places for Sufis from all over the world. Sufism is also officially banned in Turkey, but for very different reasons. It was in the Sufi orders, as the most conservative element in Islam, that the revolutionary statesman Kemal Ataturk (1881–1938) met with the sharpest resistance to his secularizing aims. Consequently, heads of orders were put to death and the orders themselves made illegal and thus driven underground. In other Islamic countries, however, the Sufi orders are a recognized part of the community –

a 'backward' part, no doubt, in the eyes of the majority for, like all mysticisms, Sufism would be untrue to itself if it subscribed to any of those aspirations and ideals which dominate the modern world.

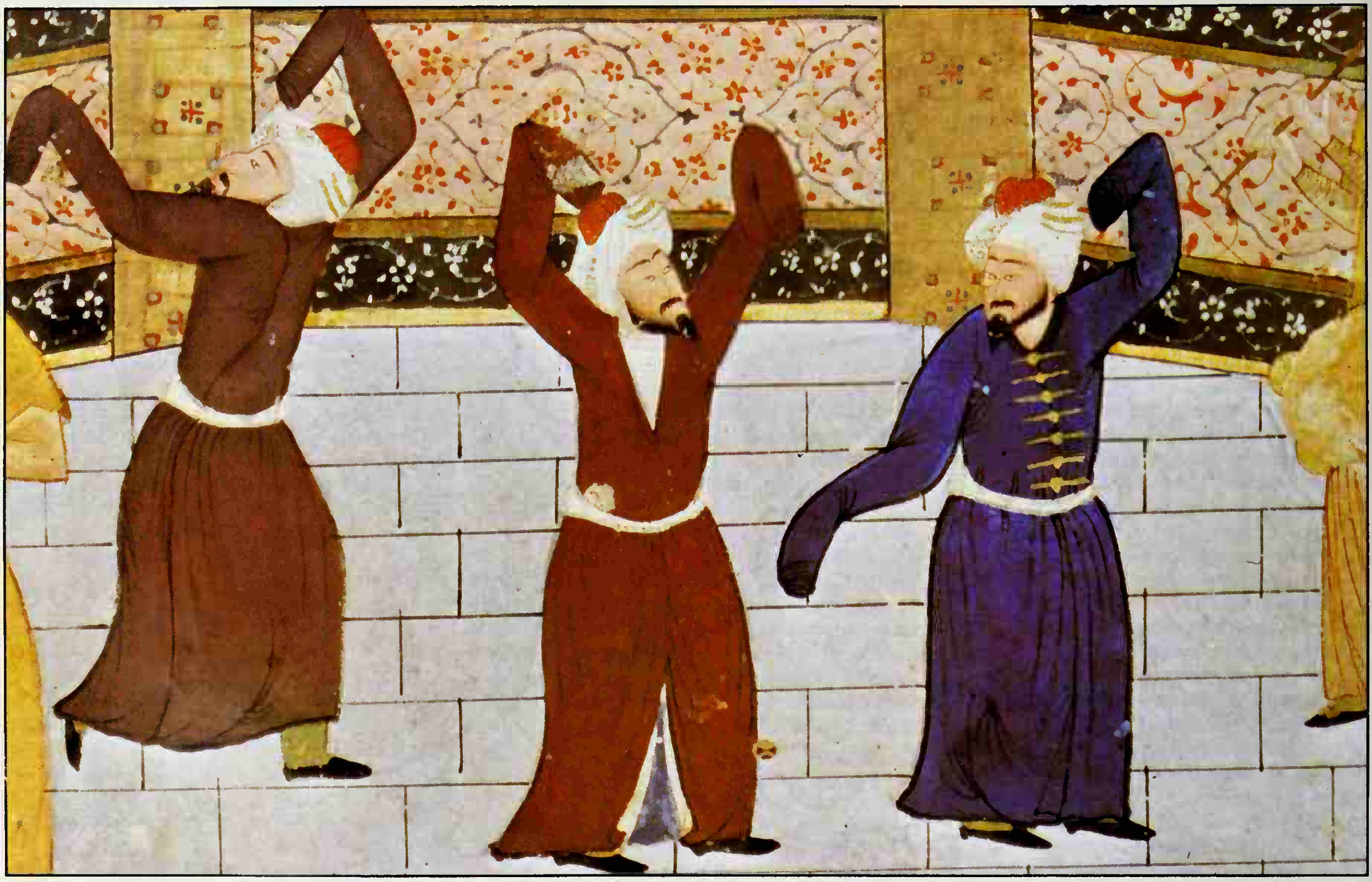
The orders differ considerably from each other. The Tijani Order which is fairly widespread in north-west Africa and particularly so in West Africa (Senegal and Nigeria, for example), and throughout the Sudan is not well disposed to other orders, which it claims to have superseded. It is less aloof and more proselytizing than they are. Some of the other orders, the Isawi and the Rifai, for example, have degenerated in certain of their branches to the point of being dominated by snake-charming and fire-eating, practices which originated as subsidiary tests of faith and of reliance upon God. But the main body of Sufism can be said to be still true to its medieval heritage.

In India the Chishti Order is of considerable importance, and so throughout the East is the Naqshabandi Order; but the most widespread in both East and West are the great Qadiri and Shadhili Orders, founded respectively by Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (d. 1166), and Abu 'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili (d. 1258), who imposed on his disciples an intellectual approach which still characterizes the Shadhili Order in its many branches. One of the most eminent of these is the Darqawi Order, with its Alawi sub-branch, founded respectively by Arabi ad-Darqawi (d. 1823) and Ahmad al-Alawi (d. 1934), both outstanding amongst the Sheikhs of more recent times.

MARTIN LINGS

FURTHER READING: Martin Lings, *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century, Shaikh Ahmad al-Alawi* (Univ. of California Press, 1972); Shaikh ad-Darqawi, *Letters of a Sufi Master* (Weiser, 1970); Idries Shah, *Seeker after Truth: a Handbook of Ṣufi Tales and Teachings* (Harper & Row, 1982); Titus Burckhardt, *Introduction to Sufi Doctrine* (Weiser); A. J. Arberry, *Sufism* (Allen & Unwin, 1979).

Dancing dervishes of the Mevlevi Order, one of the numerous Sufi sects: illustration from a Persian *Lives of the Mystics*



British Museum

MONTAGUE SUMMERS

STUDENTS OF WITCHCRAFT everywhere have reason to be grateful to the Rev. Montague Summers (1880-1948), whose many books included edited translations of the principal classic works in this field: the *Malleus Maleficarum* of Sprenger and Kramer, the *Compendium Maleficarum* of Guazzo, Bovet's *Pandaemonium* and Remy's *Demonolatry* among them.

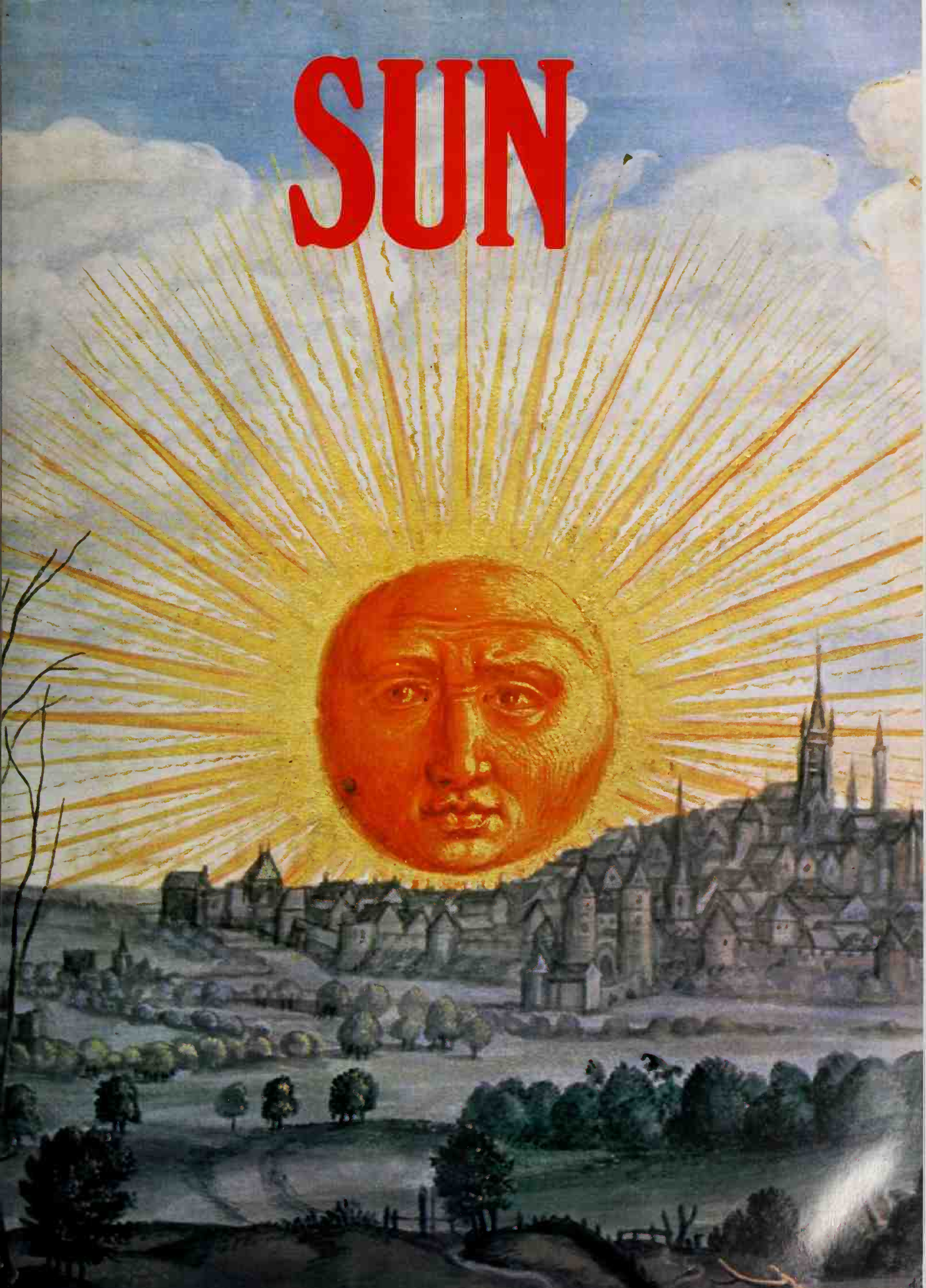
He was born into a prosperous banker's family at Clifton, near Bristol, where he was schooled, and after graduating at Trinity College, Oxford, he attended Lichfield Theological College from 1903 to 1905 and was ordained deacon in 1908. The following year, however, he and another clergyman were accused of pederasty, and he turned to the Roman Catholic church; here he was not raised to the priesthood, due to apparent lack of vocation, but finally achieved some kind of priestly ordination at the hands of Ulrich Herford, Bishop of Mercia and Middlesex in the Evangelical Catholic Communion (see WANDERING BISHOPS).

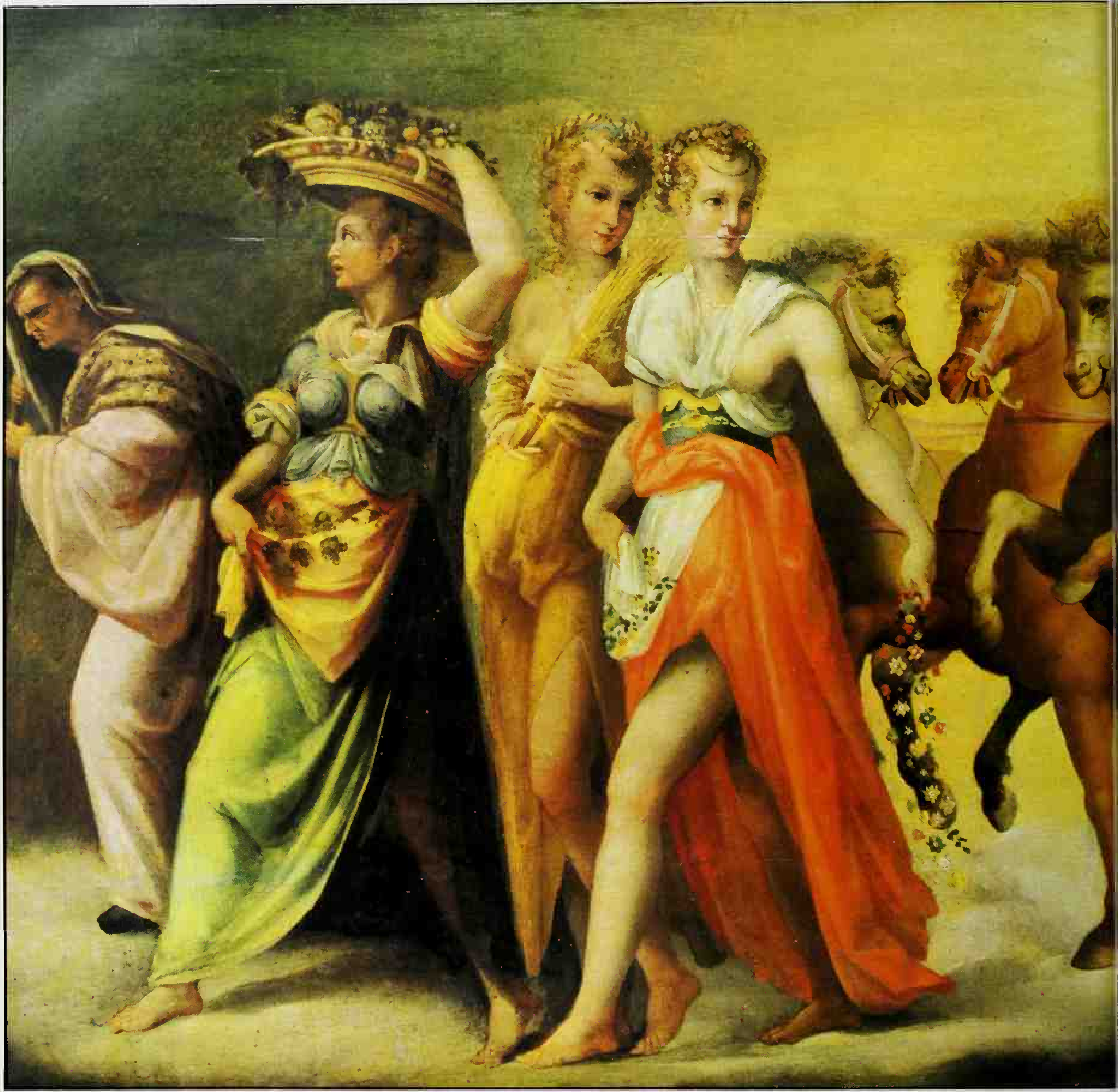
For much of his life Summers was a schoolmaster, but he managed at the same time to produce a succession of scholarly books (as well as some pornography). Apart from his interest in witches and demons – which resulted in such works as *The History of Witchcraft and Demonology* (1926), *The Geography of Witchcraft* (1927) and *The Werewolf* (1933) – he was an expert on the Gothic novel, while his rediscovery of the plays of the Restoration dramatists had a profound effect upon English theatre in the 1920s and 1930s.

He claimed that, in researching *The Vampire in Europe* (1929), he had carried out investigations at firsthand, and it was rumoured of him that he had seen the Devil. Asked if the Prince of Darkness really had a goat's head, horns and a forked tail, he replied in his characteristic high-pitched lisp: 'No *tail*, my dear'.

When he died in 1948, Summers was buried (as he had requested) in his violet-coloured vestments, with amice and alb, together with his biretta, ivory crucifix, rosary and breviary – and the coat of his deceased pet dog.

SUN

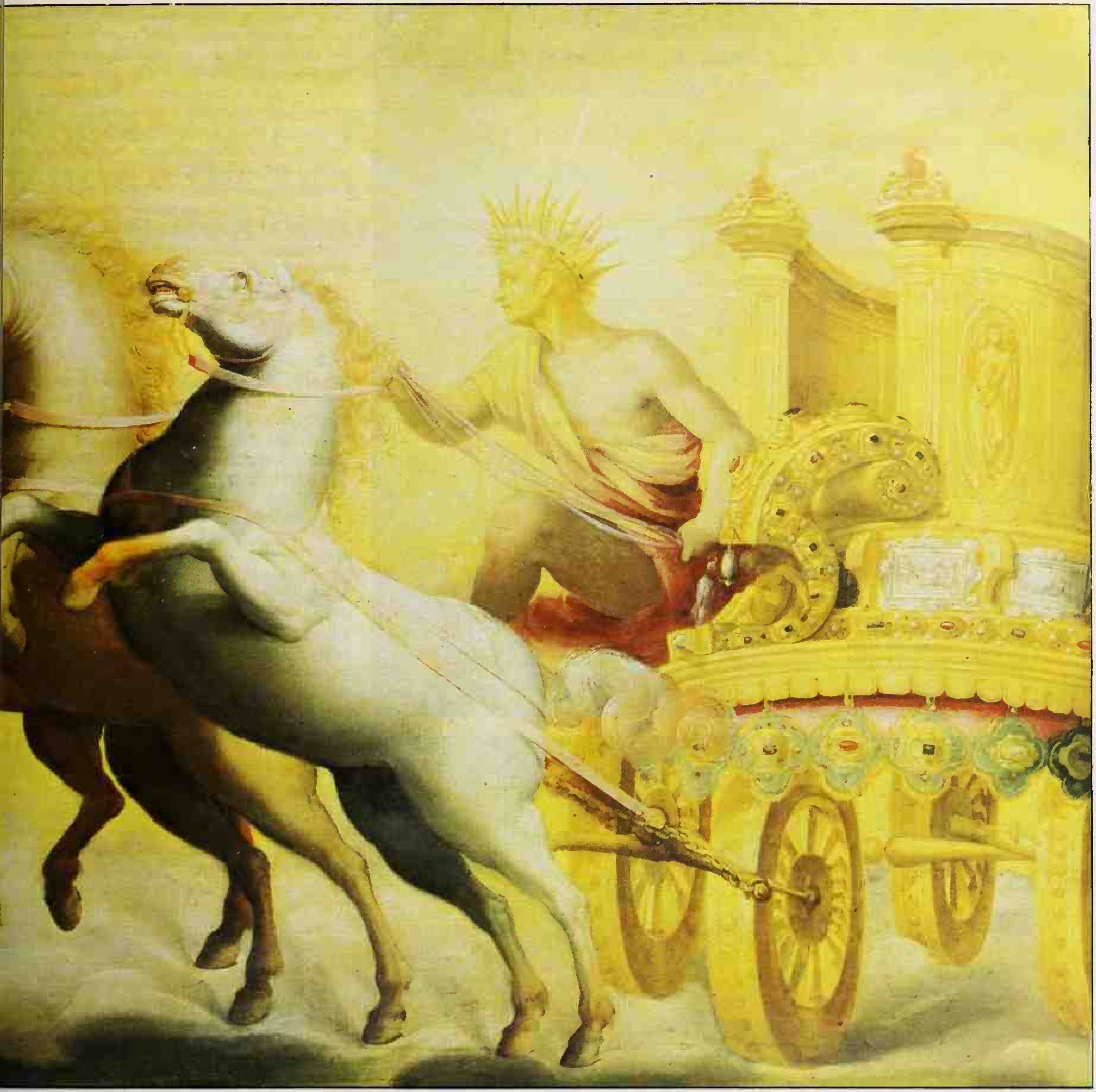




Orthodox Hindus begin the working day with an invocation of the sun: 'We meditate on the lovely light of the god, Savitri; may he inspire our thoughts'

ON THE FACE of it, there is no more obvious recipient of divine honours than the sun: visible and yet mysterious, beneficent and yet thoroughly dangerous, it is the giver of life and yet the most potent of destructive forces. In fact it can be regarded as summing up most of the characteristics which mankind has always attributed to its gods and goddesses, not least the characteristic of awesome remoteness. In the 6th century BC the Ionic philosopher Anaximander announced that the sun was not a deity, but merely a circle of fire. That he also said that it was only 28 times larger than the earth seems little more than curious; the denial of deity was the more important thing. To Anaximander's contemporaries, and the majority of his successors the world over, however, the sun was surely a deity, impinging upon the life of man at every point, measuring the rhythm of the days and the seasons, giving and withholding life, warming and burning by turns.

Nevertheless, the study of sun worship is by no means as straightforward as might at first sight appear. The simple adoration of the sun in its daily march, or ride, across the heavens can be observed and documented. But connected with this are a host of kindred notions. For instance, there is the matter of the daily and seasonal cycles which the sun establishes. Does the sun in fact establish the sacred rhythms, or is the sun itself subservient to a greater and more divine order, within which it acts essentially in the role, not of master, but of servant? Ancient Indian speculation spoke of a natural order, *rita,* of which the High Gods Varuna and Mitra (a sun god) were the guardians; but it certainly seems that they were not held to be the originators of this order. And from the other side of the world, Garcilaso de la Vega recorded the story of the Inca who was puzzled by the thought that if, as was supposed, the sun was the Supreme God, then why did he have to follow precisely the same path across the heavens every day? Was he not free to wander like the other planets? The Inca in



Corvina, Budapest

Previous page **The rising sun brings light into darkness, a symbol of inward and spiritual illumination: from *Splendor Solis*, an alchemical work of the 15th century *Above* As Phoebus Apollo, 'bright Apollo', the Greeks identified the god of prophecy, healing and the arts with the sun: in a painting from the studio of Rosso Fiorentino, the sun god escorts the four seasons of the year**

question is said to have concluded that there must be a god greater than the sun whom the sun was forced to obey, and to have set up an altar to that unknown deity.

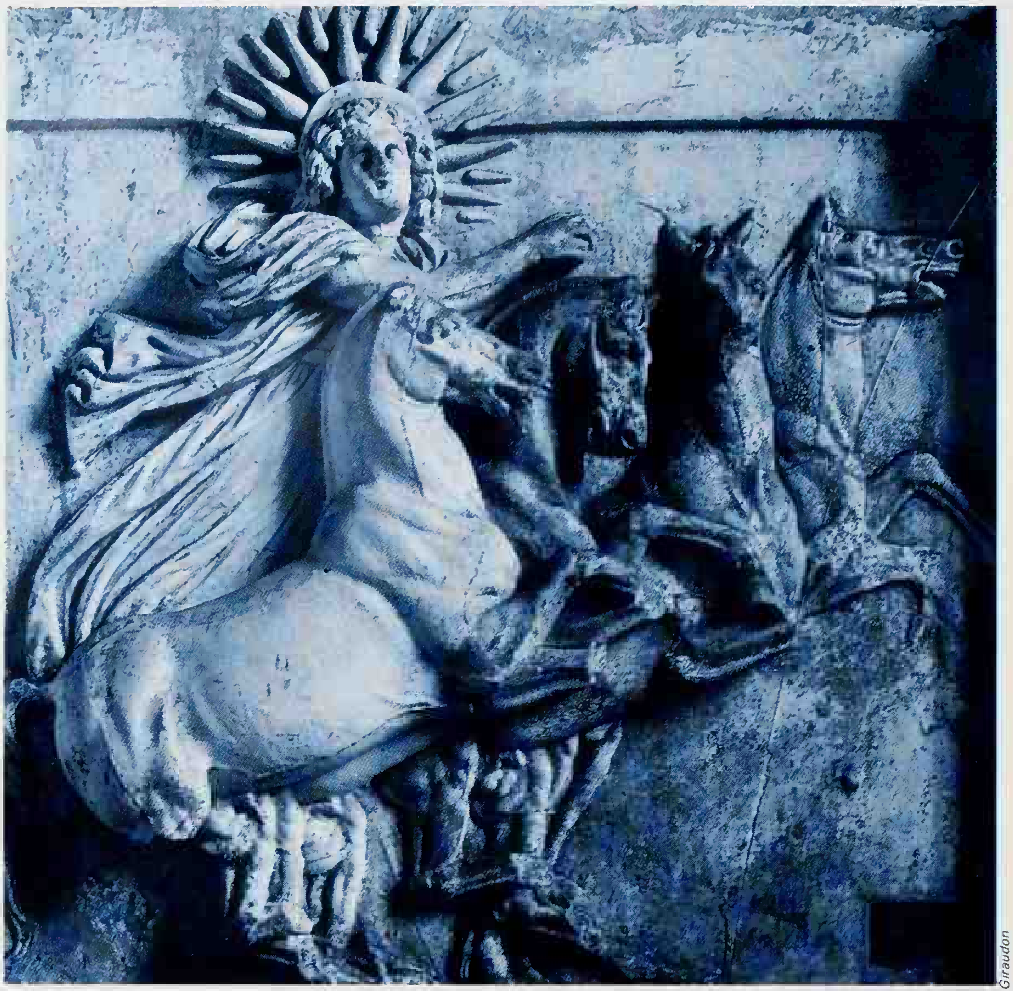
The problem here is to know what is (or was) the relationship between the sun god and the High God of the sky. Other problems concern the relationship between the sun god and the world of men as reflected, for instance, in astrology; and the sun god's role in determining man's destiny after death.

When evaluating the mythology of sun worship, a great deal obviously depends on the geographical location of myth and cult. In tropical and sub-tropical areas, where the pattern of the seasons is not as clear-cut as it is in Europe, and where the omnipresence of the sun is taken for granted for the greater part of the year, particular importance is attached to the daily cycle of the sun's rising and setting; in temperate zones and in the Arctic, the seasonal cycle is by far the more important. It is significant that the nearest approach to a solar monotheism in the history of religion comes from ancient Egypt; such a belief would have been virtually impossible in northern Europe, where the sun emerged in the spring only after a bitter struggle with dark powers.

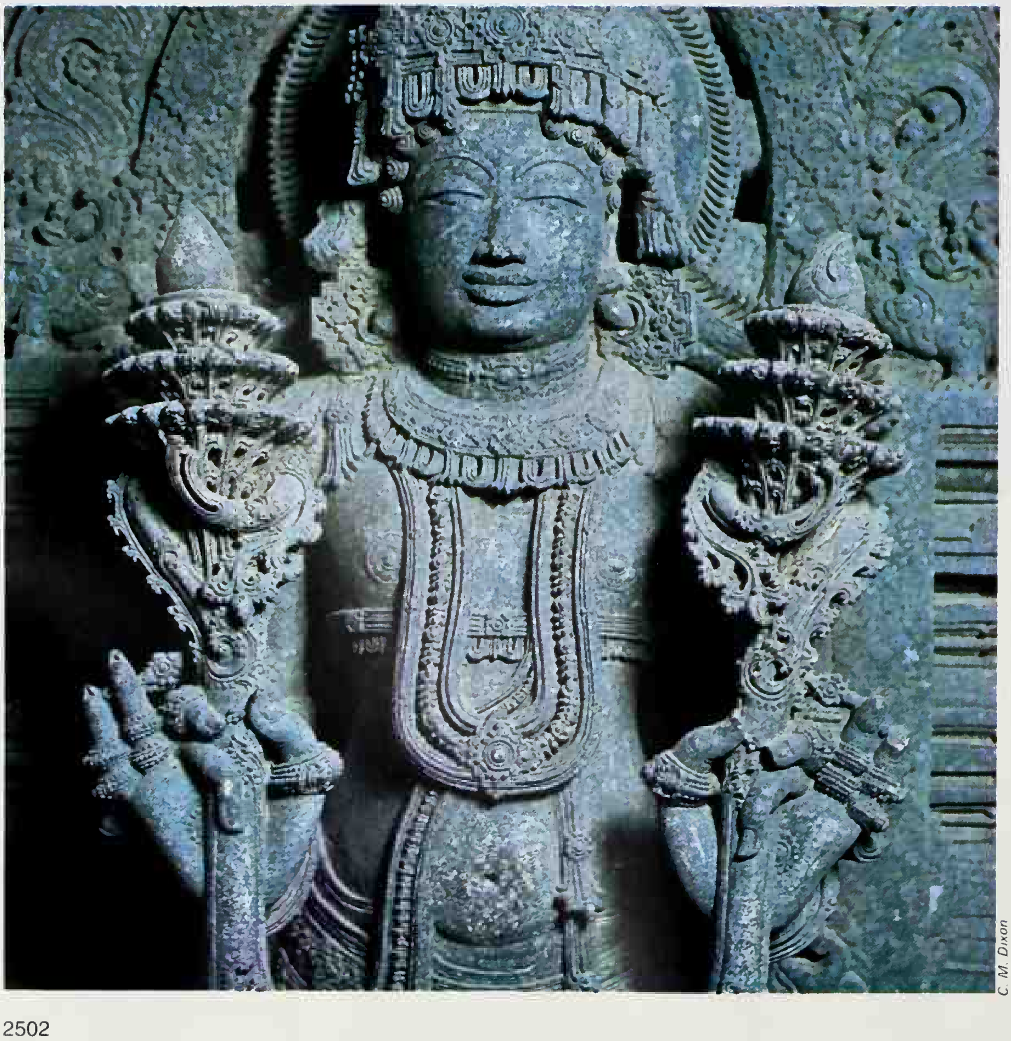
Explanatory Myths

The so-called primitive peoples of the world possess a vast store of myths concerning the sun, often coupled with moon myths, since sun and moon are frequently regarded as being related in some way.

The sun is sometimes male, sometimes female. Among certain Australian aboriginal tribes, for instance, it is personified as a woman who has a lover under the earth, among the dead. Every night she enters the underworld to be with him, and every morning ascends once more dressed in her lover's present, a red kangaroo skin. Another



Giraudon



C. M. Dixon

Left **Helios, a Greek solar deity sometimes confused with Apollo, rises from his palace in the east in readiness to drive his chariot across the heavens: chariots were also associated with the sun in Denmark and India** ***Below left*** **'It has been said that solar worship is the real religion of India': Surya holds in each hand a lotus, symbol of divine light, immortal life and fertility** ***Below right*** **Pyramid to the sun at Teotihuacan, a centre of Mexican civilization of the 1st millennium AD: the similarities between sun worship in America and in ancient Egypt have led some scholars to believe that Egyptian culture must have crossed the Atlantic**

tribe is said to have had a myth to the effect that every day the sun burns up her stock of fuel, and has to descend into the underworld each night for fresh supplies of firewood. Stories of the sun entering the underworld at night and emerging afresh every morning are legion, the sun having walked, ridden, or been carried from west to east.

Its daily course is similarly surrounded with stories and explanations. Ancient Indo-European myths usually picture the sun as driving across the sky in a golden chariot, drawn by horses, a belief which led to the horse being regarded as especially sacred. From Peru comes a variant, according to which the sun is tethered like a llama by an invisible cord to the pole of the sky, and driven round and round it by the power of the Universal Spirit. There are many such examples.

Another type of myth told of the sun concerns the need to 'tame' its power in some way. A Mexican legend tells that the sun was once a man who, to show his devotion, immolated himself in a sacrificial fire; in reward the Supreme Being conveyed him to heaven. He burned so fiercely, however, that the world was endangered by his very ardour, and arrows had to be shot at him to persuade him to temper his rays.

Myths concerning the relationship of the sun and moon explain why the two never meet in heaven. Usually it is held that sun and moon are brother and sister, but that for some reason they have become enemies, and the male partner, who can be either the sun or the moon, pursues the female for all eternity. There is a Masai legend to the effect that sun and moon were married, but fell out; in shame, the sun became bright in order that men might not look at him. From the Paiute Indians of California this is recorded: 'The sun is the father and ruler of the heavens. He is the big chief. The moon is his wife and the stars are their children. The sun eats his children whenever he can catch them. They flee before him, and are all the time afraid when he is passing through the heavens. When he appears in the morning, you see all the stars, his children, fly out of sight . . . and they do not wake to be seen again until he, their father, is about to go to his bed.'

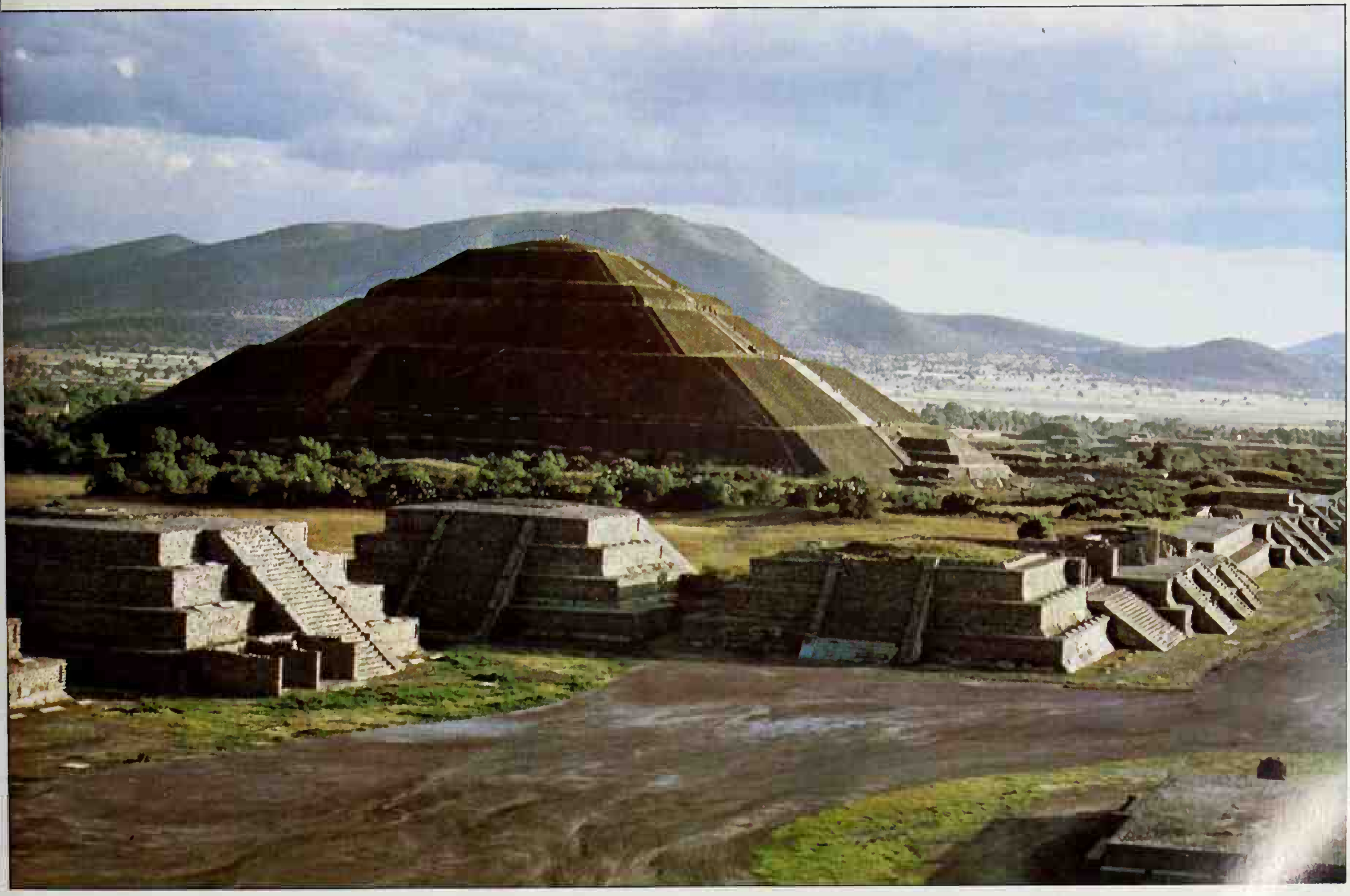
These naïve explanatory myths take on a much more serious tone in Scandinavian mythology. There the daily rising and setting

Ancient Indo-European myths usually picture the sun as driving across the sky in a golden chariot, drawn by horses

of the sun was of less importance than the sun's battle with the powers that threatened to destroy her (once again, the sun is female). In Snorri Sturluson's *Edda* the question is posed: 'Swiftly rides the sun; it is almost as though she were afraid, and she would surely not fly faster, though she were pursued by death.' The questioner is told that the sun is indeed pursued, by two wolves, the offspring of giants. 'And it is said that one of that breed will be stronger than all others . . . He feeds on the blood of all those who die, and he pours blood over the air and the sky, so that the sun ceases to shine . . .' This is not only the vision of winter, but also the vision of the end of the world, heralded, among other things, by the howling of the Fenris wolf (see END OF THE WORLD; SCANDINAVIA).

To relate stories of the sun is not necessarily to worship it; but the power of the sun was in fact an object of active worship among many archaic peoples. Once more, though, elements other than 'pure' sun worship were frequently involved. The famous Sun Dance of the Great Plains Indians of North America, for example, was part of a major act of worship that lasted for eight days, and took place every summer after the buffalo hunt (see GREAT PLAINS INDIANS). On arrival at the place of meeting, the participating tribes formed a circle, leaving an opening to the east, the direction of the rising sun. A vast lodge, which might in some cases be open to the sky, was erected and an altar was placed to the west of the site. The dance itself lasted from two to four days, during which the dancers kept their gaze fixed on the sun or on the lodge's centre pole, which symbolized the cosmic tree. Self-torture was sometimes practised as an act of dedication and sacrifice, and as a means of obtaining that vision without which the Sun Dance was held to be incomplete.

It is perhaps justifiable to see in the Sun Dance an elaborate form of a type of sun ritual that was once found in many parts of the world, and which aimed at the annual renewal of the cosmic order by means of participation in the divine power of the sun, the greatest of the Great Spirit's manifestations.



William MacQuitty

Modern Sun Worship

Our civilization is almost wholly secularized, having lost its symbolic dimension and its guiding myths. That was the meaning of Nietzsche's cry 'God is dead'...

Instead we find our apparently secular substitutes. The cult of the sun is certainly one of the more important. Millions of men, women and children of all classes and many types go to places, usually the edge of the sea, held suitable for their secular rites. They buy vast quantities of oils, greases and lotions to anoint, not as of old the *benben* or other sacred images, but their own bodies. They don strange dark spectacles and strip off their clothes. No less than former worshippers, they are prepared to suffer. Strong men make themselves ill, women ruin their complexions, children get sunstroke. Since the cult began, acres of skin must have crusted and peeled, exposing areas of pink and white ruin surely as painful as the gashes of the Aztecs. Yet day after day they return to worship, determined to gain the tan which is the proof of salvation.

Among all these millions there must be many who could say with Julian the Apostate, 'From my childhood an extraordinary longing for the rays of the god penetrated deep into my soul.' I do not doubt that there is an element of mysticism in all these practices... Nudists, presumably, must share in it. And it is there because the sun in our skies has always been able to invoke such feeling in the bodies and minds it has created out of rock and water. Quite simply, the sun has been the agent of our long creation, and we know it.

Meanwhile the travel agencies, far more cynical than any priesthood, pile up their gold. They cover their pamphlets with sun images bright with rays and happy-faced. And when the worshippers reach the beaches and the gardens do they not place themselves under huge, many-quartered umbrellas? Perhaps they, too, are solar symbols – sun wheels, mandalas...

Jacquetta Hawkes *Man and the Sun*

The Maker of Light

It has been said that solar worship was the real religion of India, and to this day the orthodox Hindu begins his working day with this invocation of the sun: 'We meditate on the lovely light of the god, Savitri; may he inspire our thoughts'.

Another hymn to the sun, this time from the *Ramayana*, reads in part: 'Adore the Sun rising with all his rays, receiving the obeisance of gods and demons, the shining maker of light... He is indeed the embodiment of all gods... He who with his rays consumes, produces, propels; who traverses the skies like a bird, shines like gold, makes the days and is the golden seminator of the universe. The hot, tawny disc, he burns everything and is indeed death; he is also the universal creator, greatly effulgent, loving and the source of all good...'

The Hindu scriptures contain references to the sun under many names and in many aspects, three of the best known being Savitri, Surya and Mitra. In classical times there were several distinct sects of sun worshippers in India, one of which was responsible for building what must be one of the most spectacular pieces of religious architecture anywhere in the world, the sun temple at Konarak. Built in the form of a temple car, with huge stone wheels, and drawn by horses, this is a tangible reminder of the mythical form in which the sun presented itself to the Indian mind. The close link between sun cult and fertility cult is attested by the erotic nature of many of the sculptures with which the temple is adorned.

An interesting parallel to the Konarak symbolism is provided by the Trundholm sun chariot, excavated in 1902 in Denmark. This is also in the form of a wheeled car drawn by horses, although in this case the centrepiece of the car is a model of the disc of the sun. It has been supposed that the chariot is an actual cult object, carried around the fields at certain times of the year, particularly in spring or at the time of sowing, in order to ensure a fruitful year.

The Indian god Mitra is better known in his Persian form as Mithra, although in this case the sun was only one of his aspects. From Persia the cult of Mithra (see MITHRAS) passed into the Hellenistic world and the Roman Empire, where elements of solar symbolism were combined into the cult of Sol Invictus, the unconquered sun, by the Emperor Heliogabalus (3rd century AD). Following him, in 274 AD, the Emperor Aurelian built a magnificent temple in Rome to Sol Invictus.

Sun Worshippers of Egypt

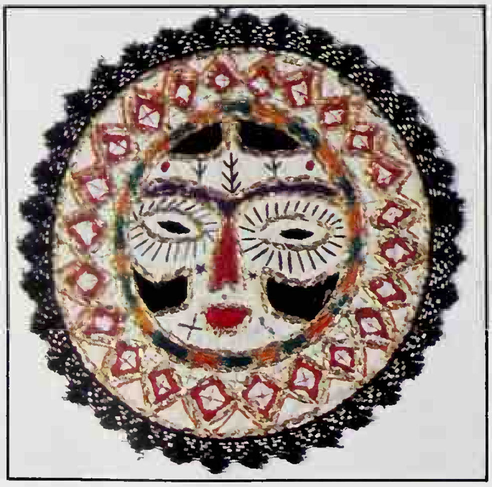
One of the impulses which helped to establish the solar cult in Rome certainly came from Egypt, where sun worship had been established for many centuries. Its undisputed pre-eminence in Egypt is one of the factors that has led some scholars to postulate the diffusion of this type of religion from Egypt westward to the Americas, eastward into India and northward into Europe. Certainly, all the nations which went to make up the Near Eastern cultural cauldron in ancient times were sun worshippers to some extent.

The sun god, who was always male, had a variety of names: in Sumeria he was Babbar or Utu, in Babylon Shamash, in Ugarit, Shapshu. Among the Israelites the worship of the sun was officially forbidden, since it was merely a created agent of God: 'And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night..." ' (Genesis 1.14). In Deuteronomy (4.19) the Israelites are warned to 'beware lest... when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and worship them and serve them...' Such prohibitions were never placed on hypothetical dangers. King Josiah of Judah, in the course of his reforms, 'removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the Lord... and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire' (2 Kings 23.11). Solomon's Temple, from which these images were removed, was in all probability oriented in such a way that the rays of the rising sun shone into the sanctuary at the autumnal equinox, which is a common feature of temples throughout the ancient Near East.

In Egypt itself, sun symbolism is so pervasive that it is difficult to disentangle separate elements within it. However, the most widely recognized name of the sun god was Re (or Ra), and the centre of his worship was at Heliopolis, in Lower Egypt (see EGYPT). He is a typical, perhaps the typical, sun god: a giver of life, and creator of the balance between light and darkness which is typified by his regular rising and setting. He traverses heaven, not in a chariot, but in a boat, and during the night he sails in another boat through the underworld. Every morning he conquers the dragon Apophis, who lies in wait for him (and, on the occasion of infrequent eclipses, catches him temporarily). This daily battle reflects the struggle which took place at the beginning of time when, in the form of the Creator god Atum, he created light and order out of darkness and chaos. Re is also identified with other deities, notably with the sky god Horus (see HORUS).

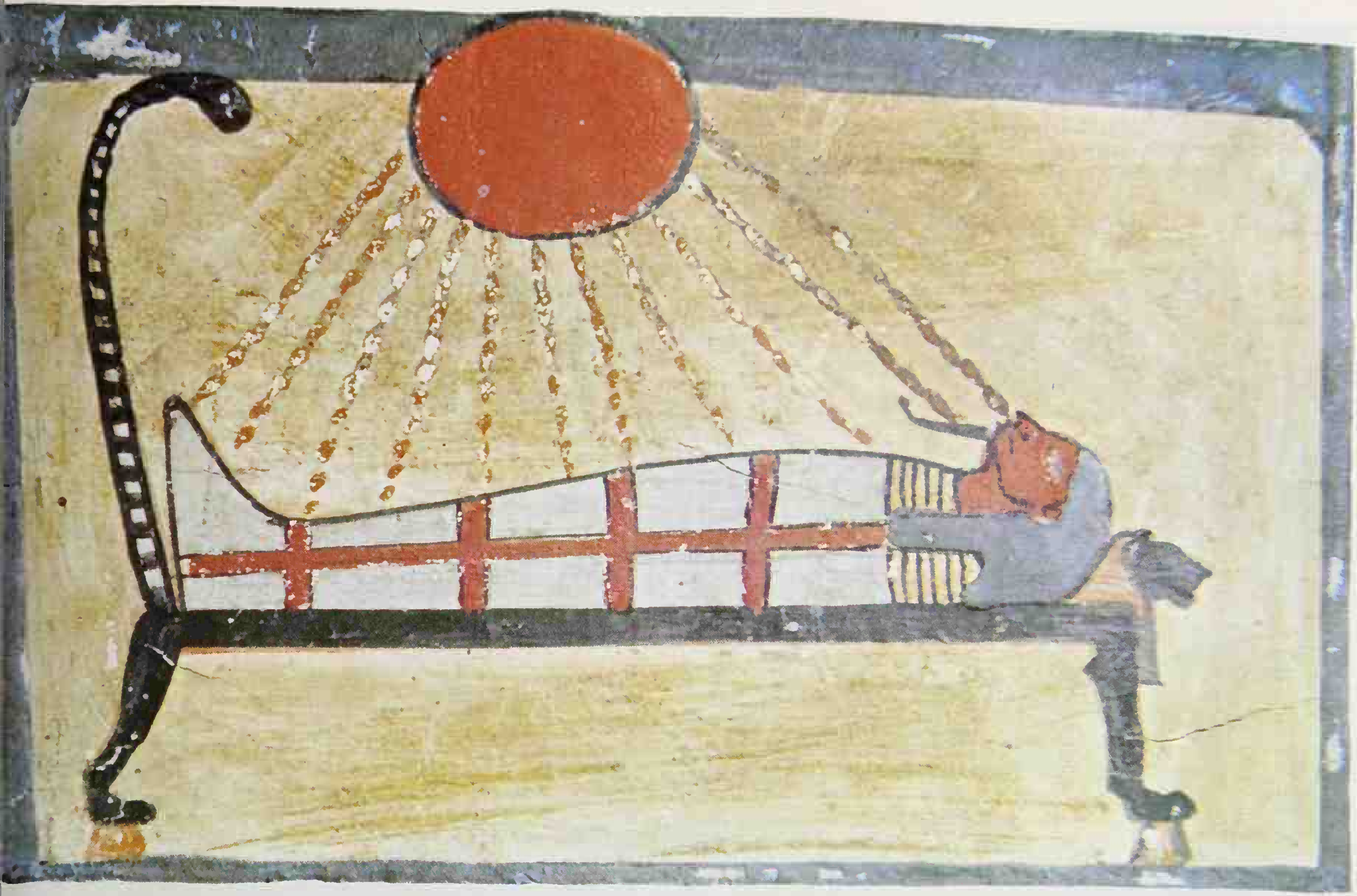
In the Pyramid Texts (see BOOK OF THE DEAD) the pharaoh is already regarded as passing into the sphere of Re after death; later he became identified with the living Horus. After the 5th Dynasty, it became customary to refer to the pharaoh as 'son of the sun', a feature of royal houses from India to the Americas. The greatest of Egypt's sun kings was Amenhotep IV, also known as Ikhenaten (see IKHNATEN), who attempted, partly no doubt for political reasons, to create a solar universalism out of elements of the Heliopolitan tradition.

The possibility that, at various times in the remote past, adventurers, merchants or missionaries might have communicated something of Egypt's devotion to the sun god to other lands and races is an intriguing one. Unfortunately it is only a possibility, and one which archeology is very far indeed



Jeffrey Craig

Embroidery representing the sun, from Isfahan, Iran



Painting from the coffin of a Theban priest, Besenmut, dating from c 600 BC: it shows the dead man receiving life and warmth from the rays of the sun. In Egypt the sun god, Re, was the giver of life and the bringer of light out of darkness

Michael Holford

from having confirmed.

There are two entirely independent lines along which a few scholars have believed this influence to have been transmitted. One leads from the eastern Mediterranean westward and northward into Spain, France, the west of Britain and Ireland, north Germany, Denmark and southern Sweden. Its evidence consists in the trail of vast stone structures, megaliths, in which the dead were buried, and in the stone circles and alignments, of which the best known are Stonehenge in Britain and Carnac in Brittany, at which the sun may have been worshipped. Unfortunately, speculation has tended to run riot as soon as this subject has been broached; but it seems to have been established that the megalith-builders were sun worshippers.

The second line leads directly westward, out across the Atlantic to the Americas. The most recent advocate of this theory is the Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl, whose two voyages in the papyrus boats *Ra I* and *Ra II* aimed at demonstrating that such a culture-contact would have been possible. But the theory was expressed forcefully in the 1920s by a British scholar, W. J. Perry, who pointed out that the Peruvian royal family, like that of Egypt, mummified their dead, practised marriage of near relatives, built pyramids, and called themselves 'children of the sun'.

Writing about the megalith-builders in *The Growth of Civilization* (1924) he noted that: 'The presence of vast graves undoubtedly means the coming to Europe of members of a ruling family, for no one else could build them. The use of solar symbols suggests that the people responsible for these graves were sun-worshippers. Since, the world over, 'the sun-cult has been an ancestor cult in the family of the Children of the Sun, who ruled Egypt... for thousands of years, it would seem that these facts, when put together, mean that the Children of the Sun had begun to move out from Egypt, and had founded kingdoms in various parts of Europe, just as they had done when moving out to America.'

No doubt Perry's theories went too far; but the fact, not of sun worship, which needs no diffusionist excuse, but of certain forms of sun worship in various parts of the world, calls for explanation in terms of more than mere chance.

Warnings of Misrule

One other general feature of sun worship is the association of the sun with other heavenly bodies in patterns of astrological prediction. The sun was never isolated in the heavens. Subservient to the High God, linked in various mythical ways to the moon and the stars, maintaining the fabric of the universe by means of its regular rhythm, the sun served in many cultures as a pattern of natural order backed by divine favour. To be sure, sacrifices were always necessary, often, particularly in the Americas, blood sacrifices, in order to mark man's acknowledgement of his dependence; but the possibility of the withdrawal of the light was always present. It happened every winter in the North. And on rare occasions it would happen without warning, in which case it was taken as an omen of dire events to come (see ECLIPSE).

This extract is from an edict of the Chinese Emperor Ming Ti, consequent upon the solar eclipse of 233 AD:

'We have heard that if a sovereign is remiss in government, God terrifies him by calamities and portents. These are divine reprimands sent to recall him to a sense of duty. Thus, eclipses of the sun and moon are manifest warnings that the rod of empire is not wielded aright. Ever since we ascended the throne, our inability to continue the glorious traditions of our departed ancestors and carry on the great work of civilization has now culminated in a warning message from on high. It therefore behoves us to issue commands for personal reformation, in order to avert impending calamity.'

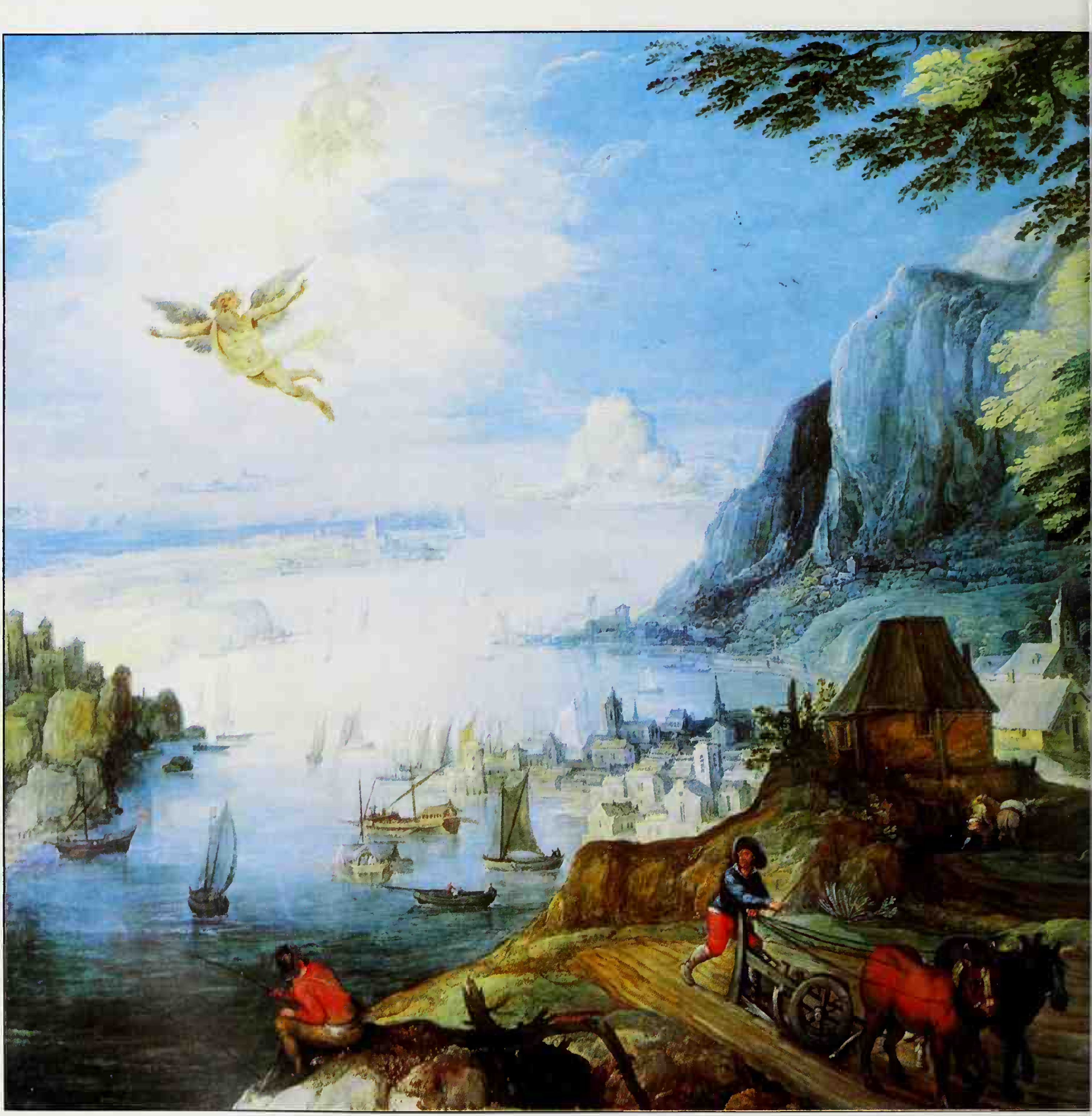
There may be more spectacular, more bloody and evocative forms of sun worship in the history of religion; but there is none more moral.

(See also ALCHEMY; AZTECS; INCAS.)

ERIC J. SHARPE

The Sun in Astrology

As the most important of the heavenly bodies, the sun naturally plays a dominating role in the interpretation of a horoscope, and is said to be the most powerful



single factor in the chart. In popular astrology columns in newspapers and magazines, you will find yourself classified under your 'Sun sign', the sign of the zodiac which the sun was 'in' at the moment of your birth, with the implication that this is the major general key to analysis of your character and fortunes.

More sophisticated interpretation tends to give as great, if not greater, weight to the Ascendant, where the sun rises, and the Mid-heaven, where it is at its peak of power, and both the sign and the house occupied by the sun are taken as influential factors (see ASTROLOGY).

Since the sun is the world's natural powerhouse of light and heat, it is believed to affect the creative abilities, vitality, ambition and will-power of human beings. Its position in the sky is generally said to indicate your basic temperament, the type of person you are, and sometimes your physical appearance. Some astrologers stress its role in influencing the conscious or 'lighted' part of your mind (with the unconscious mind being the domain of the moon).

The legendary inventor Daedalus made wings for himself and his son Icarus, but when the boy presumed to fly too near the sun the heat melted the wax, and he fell into the Aegean Sea and was drowned: *The Fall of Icarus* by Petrus Stevens and Joos de Momper

If the sun is favourably placed in the horoscope, especially if it is in its own sign, Leo, it is said to produce a commanding and kingly personality – powerful, proud, dignified, impressive, generous, faithful and affectionate.

This symbolic link between the sun and kingship is very old, and the good humour often associated with the sun follows from the cheerfulness which its radiant appearance in the sky tends to promote in northern countries.

FURTHER READING: Glyn Daniel, *The Idea of Prehistory* (C. A. Watts, 1964); Jacquetta Hawkes, *Man and the Sun* (The Cresset Press, 1962); W. J. Perry, *The Children of the Sun* (Methuen, 1923); W. Olcott, *Sun Lore of All Ages* (Longwood Press, 1984, c1914); V. Von Hagen, *The Ancient Sun Kingdoms of the Americas* (Beckman Pubs.).

SUNYAVADA

GAUTAMA, the Buddha, taught that the soul is a temporary combination of transient entities called *skandhas* (see BUDDHISM). Mahayana Buddhism, which arose about four centuries after the death of Buddha (c 483 BC), developed this doctrine more fully, and several of its early literary works, called Sutras, proclaimed the doctrine of emptiness, Sunyavada.

Whereas in early Buddhism wisdom is nsight into impermanence, suffering and no-self, in Sunyavada the perfection of wisdom is the realization that all *dharmas* (doctrines or laws of life) are 'empty'. Transmigration and Nirvana (see NIRVANA) are both empty. The saviours are empty, and he beings whom they save are empty. From he absolute viewpoint, there is no difference whatsoever between the relative and the absolute, between *samsara*, the world of change and transmigration, and Nirvana, he perfect state beyond change. Emptiness, hough, is not non-being, and Sunyavada is not nihilism, no matter how readily the charge springs to the lips of those bewildered and frightened by this doctrine. Emptiness s just that Middle Path between being and non-being that Gautama had declared. Things do not have being, because they are mutable and impermanent, and what is truly real does not change or perish. Things do not have non-being, because they arise and function, and whatever appears and acts is relatively real. That things are empty means that they lack own-being (*svabhava*), that is, they exist through the power of another rather than through their own power, they do not possess an inalienable set of marks, and they have no immutable essence.

The Hinayana Sutras say that all the skandhas, sense-spheres and elements are impermanent and devoid of self, which is tantamount to saying they are empty. However, the Abhidharma schools, especially the Sarvastivadins, drew up lists of 70 or so conditioned dharmas (force-factors), including all the skandhas, which they treated as realities. The Sarvastivadin doctrine that not only present but past and future dharmas are real comes perilously close to the theory that coming-to-be is just manifestation of what was already there in a latent state. Sunyavada was a reaction against this tendency in Abhidharma. Mahayana, charging that the Abhidharmists denied an *atman* (soul) in the person but admitted one in the dharmas, declared that both person and dharmas are empty of atman.

The Sunyavadin polemic against the Abhidharmists, and against Samkhya and Vaisesika (the two major Hindu philosophies at the time), was prosecuted most brilliantly by Nagarjuna (c 150–250 AD), founder of the Madhyamika school of Mahayana Buddhism. Born a South Indian Brahmin and well educated in Sanskrit and the Hindu philosophies, he became a Buddhist and proceeded to defend Mahayana principles using the logic and debating techniques of the Hindus. He reduces to absurdity all propositions that assume the existence of an own-being. This is not too hard, since the concept is self-contradictory as Nagarjuna defines it. Own-being exists and is immutable. But to exist means to change.

A sample of Nagarjuna's dialectic is his critique of causation. He says that a thing cannot arise from itself, since that would be the arising of the already arisen, an absurdity as great as the second cutting off of a head. A thing cannot arise from another thing, since that which is non-existent cannot be the agent of the action 'arising' or the object of the action 'production'; a real action requires that both agent and object be real, too. Nor can a thing arise from a combination of other things (the Abhidharma and Vaisesika position), since the effect does not exist in the separate causes before they are combined.

The Empty-ists introduced a whole new epistemology (theory of the grounds of knowledge) to the Buddhist tradition. Ordinary cognition is essentially deceptive, they held, because it involves thought-construction (*vikalpa*). What is changing is grasped as something persisting, class properties are superimposed on events that are really unique particulars, and consequently the imagination, like a magician, figments the ordinary world which is really an illusion or phantom. Ordinary language carries with it the acceptance of vikalpas and consequently the belief in the own-being of things. Nagarjuna's dialectic aims to purge thought and language by the use of thought and language, just as the physician uses poison to cure poison.

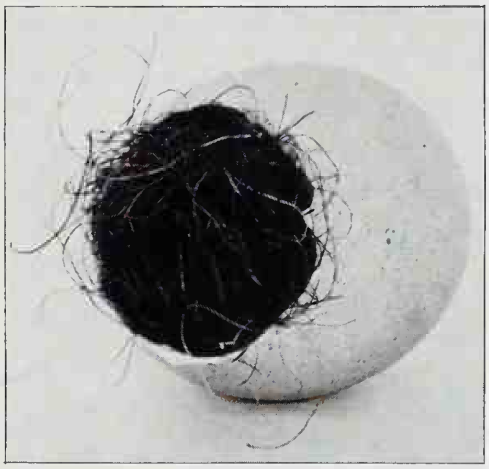
Man resorts to irrational beliefs whenever his faith wilts and he becomes afraid; superstition s a form of personal magic which is used for coming to terms with the unknown

SUPERSTITIONS

T HAS been said that man is a religious animal, but it could equally be averred that he is a superstitious one. Throughout the whole of man's history an elaborate system of apparently irrational safeguards, often barbaric in character, has provided a foundation for much of his ritual life. The minor ceremonies which survive today in the form of superstitions, are a constant reminder of the fact that man's mind has probably changed but little from that of his primitive ancestors.

Many of these superstitions are apparently outward manifestations of deeply-seated anxieties, the precise character of which remains as yet relatively unexplored territory. Their very existence implies an unquestioning assumption that there is some power (or powers) external to man himself, which is capricious, tyrannical and highly dangerous, a force that must be cajoled and won over to one's side, or, if it is hostile, kept at bay.

The word superstition is related to the Latin *superstes*, a word which includes among its meanings that of outliving or surviving. Used in this sense, superstition became a useful term for the description of religious ideas which lived on when the religion from which they sprang had died. For this reason superstitions have usually been condemned as relics of outmoded ways of thinking, rather than as living expressions. More commonly the term has been used to denigrate forms of faith which disagree with one's own. In the 16th century 'Popish superstitions' were roundly condemned by Protestants, and in the 19th century pious missionaries risked their lives to rescue pagan savages from 'superstitious barbarism'.



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Most superstitions embody some kind of specious logic, even though there may be no scientific basis for it: in previous centuries an eggshell would be stuffed with horsehair and then rubbed on a sick person's body before being thrown into the street, in the expectation that the disease would be transferred to whomever trod on it

Yet however superficially absurd their character, unvarying features of behaviour deserve to be treated seriously. Any examination of contemporary superstitious beliefs indicates that these should not necessarily be written off as the result of errors of observation or reasoning, but should be considered as permanent traits of mind.

The thought-processes of pre-scientific man can be observed in the widespread and still current superstition that breaking a mirror (see MIRROR) brings seven years' bad luck. The reflected image was originally regarded as the *alter ego*, or other soul, and damaging it was supposed to cause an injury to the person who had broken the mirror. Fear of walking under a ladder (see STEPS) may be partly derived from the terror once felt at the sight of the gallows, which was often merely a ladder propped against a tree.

The Philosophy of Magic

All superstitions seem to have the dual purpose of attracting favourable influences and warding off unfavourable ones. The name we give to these influences may be good luck and bad luck but they correspond too closely to the good and evil spirits of our primitive ancestors to be dismissed as

A corpse's eyes will be closed, sometimes by weighting them with coins: superstitious fears still govern our attitude to death

illogical fantasies. The curious predisposition of civilized man to revert in times of crisis to an archetypal mode of thought was noted by Paul Bauer in *Christianity and Superstition,* and he added that whereas the primitive man was perfectly at home in his superstitious environment, the civilized man most certainly is not.

It can therefore be argued that at the root of every type of superstition lies a belief in magic, which is a philosophy to which man resorts again and again whenever his modern gods fail him; in short, when his faith wilts and he becomes afraid. Superstition offers the comforting assurance that it is possible to influence one's fate for good and evil by will-power reinforced with ritual. There is obviously only a difference in degree between the act of worshipping a sacred tree and that of 'touching wood'. By physical contact with a piece of the magically charged wood one summons the power of the tree-spirit to one's aid. This magic is of the defensive type, however, for although the wood may hold bad luck at bay, it has no power to attract good luck.

More positive luck-bringing measures are the various uses of charms and talismans. Although to most people nowadays such objects have little real significance, the modern charm bracelet, first introduced about a century ago, has found ready acceptance as a luck-bringer. The symbolic meaning of the particular charms – the horseshoes, lucky pigs, and nowadays miniature golf clubs and cars – is quite lost upon the wearer, who is conscious only of the fact that they are supposed to exercise a collective power to attract good fortune. To an earlier generation, each particular charm would have had its clearly defined function; the pig, for instance, representing the Scandinavian Sun Boar, protected its domestic counterpart from evil; while the horseshoe, having the shape of a crescent moon, provided a safeguard against witches (see BOAR; HORSESHOE).

The most important characteristic of a luck-bringer is the source of the power with which it is endowed. How does a piece of wood or metal acquire its status as a charm, and what are the channels by which superstitions are transmitted? One of the ways in which an object may acquire supernatural power is through association; thus a toy animal given to a child by its grandmother is regarded as an embodiment of her love and is a powerful luck-bringer. In a series of experiments carried out among London children by the present writer, it became clear that superstitions are mainly communicated to the child by his mother or grandmother, and only occasionally by his father. In an almost literal as well as a figurative sense, they are 'taken in with the mother's milk'. The superstitious routines or lucky charms made their appearance at times of crisis, such as an examination. The particular type of charm employed included objects such as a lump of coal or a bent nail, the one originally representing the power of fire and the other that of iron (see FIRE; IRON). Charms that have failed to produce the desired results are rarely discarded but instead are hidden from sight in a desk or drawer. Luck-bringers are traditionally kept secret except in times of crisis, since discussing them is supposed to exhaust their powers. Protective charms, on the other hand, are more openly displayed since their function is to keep bad luck at bay, in other words to warn off evil spirits.

Stages in the Life Cycle

Two human fears may be found at the root of a vast number of widely differing superstitions: firstly, fear in the face of change at the various crises of life, and secondly, fear of presuming upon the future, thus inviting the anger of the gods.

Of the two, perhaps the most dominant is that aroused by the prospect of change. It was for this reason that new objects and occurrences were in the past greeted with elaborate ceremonies designed to ward off the hostility of the supernatural powers.

Among primitive peoples, the various stages of development in each individual from birth to death were always associated with protective devices, the vestiges of which survived until recently in the form of superstitions. With today's safer child-bearing, many of the old birth taboos have disappeared, but some mothers-to-be continue to observe superstitious rites, such as those calculated to produce a child of the desired sex. A mother who wants a boy, for example, will wear a blue dress, and when hoping for a girl, she may still wear pink. A relic of the old uncertainty associated with birth survives in the belief that it is unlucky to take the pram into the house until after the baby has been born; an example of the superstitious fear of presuming upon the future (see BIRTH).

The onset of puberty was originally accompanied by magic rites designed to give protection against the hostility of evil spirits who were supposed to be particularly aggressive at this important period of one's life (see INITIATION; MENSTRUATION; RITES OF PASSAGE). The time has long since passed when menstrual blood was considered so threatening that a butcher would not permit his daughter to enter his shop during her periods, but it is still possible to find individuals who retain the belief that the sexual act carried out with a woman at such times can result in venereal disease.

With marriage comes a complete change of direction in the lives of both partners, and the marriage ceremony is a veritable museum of old superstitions (see MARRIAGE). Again out of fear of anticipating the future, the bride is careful not to see her image as a completely wedded woman in the mirror. If she has to take a last look before leaving for the church, she is careful to take off her glove. For the same reason, she will take care to avoid being seen by the groom before the actual ceremony. Every feature of this important magical occasion has its particular superstitions; even the dressmaker who inserts the first stitch into the wedding dress can expect to be a bride herself before the year is out. Should the wedding ring, which is in effect a magic circle, be removed or broken it becomes ominous for the marriage prospects.

Many primitive sexual superstitions have passed down the generations. Because the heat of the sun was once thought to be the source of life on earth, we continue to regard Mediterranean men as sexual athletes and Negroes as sexual dynamos (see RACE MYTHS). Because sexual activity was once regarded as a magical act, the seed or semen became sacrosanct; hence the long-standing myth that masturbation leads inevitably to a weakening of the physical powers, madness or even death. This may fairly rank as superstition.

Sickness and ill health, once the most feared of life's crises since they could lead to financial ruin, have lost some of their superstitious associations, thanks to modern medicine and welfare systems. Even so, to boast of excellent health is regarded as inviting psychic reprisals. The permanent fear of creating a situation by the mere act of referring to it by name is the real reason why certain diseases are mentioned only in hushed tones. For the same reason, the word death itself is often avoided.

The onset of death is even today associated with natural occurrences, prophetic visions and mystical utterances. Here, at the grand climacteric, superstition reaches its peak. The moment of death itself is signalled by stopping of clocks, and pious drawing of curtains and the covering of mirrors. The mourner, as Geoffrey Gorer has pointed out, has entered 'a special state of mind'. It is in the funeral ceremony that one observes an intensity of superstitious awe that no longer survives in the other departments of life. If the wreath has ceased to be regarded as a magic circle to contain the soul and prevent its return to haunt the living, it remains none the less obligatory even in cremations (see BURIAL).

War and Peace

A crisis in the life of a nation, as in the life-cycle of an individual, is the focus of superstition, and it is traditionally the onset of war which raises the tempo and intensity of irrational belief. During the First and Second World Wars a number of superstitions which were centuries old suddenly received a new lease of life. To paint the portrait of a battleship now became, to the seaman's mind, the equivalent of a sentence of death upon her. The jinx ship which is a commonplace of nautical life was discussed with even greater anxiety than previously. Sailors when about to embark upon a voyage considered it dangerous if a menstruating woman sewed a badge of rank onto a uniform. In 1914 German prisoners-of-war bore ancient amulets offering protection against death from bullets. In 1942 American servicemen carried iron-bound Bibles in their breast pockets for exactly the same reason.

Aircrews tended to resort under danger to a variety of death-defying fetishes, including amulets, mascots and lucky silk stockings, while their planes were invaded by those latter-day familiars, the gremlins. The belief in lucky and unlucky days was revived and one and all displayed a reluctance to presume upon the future.

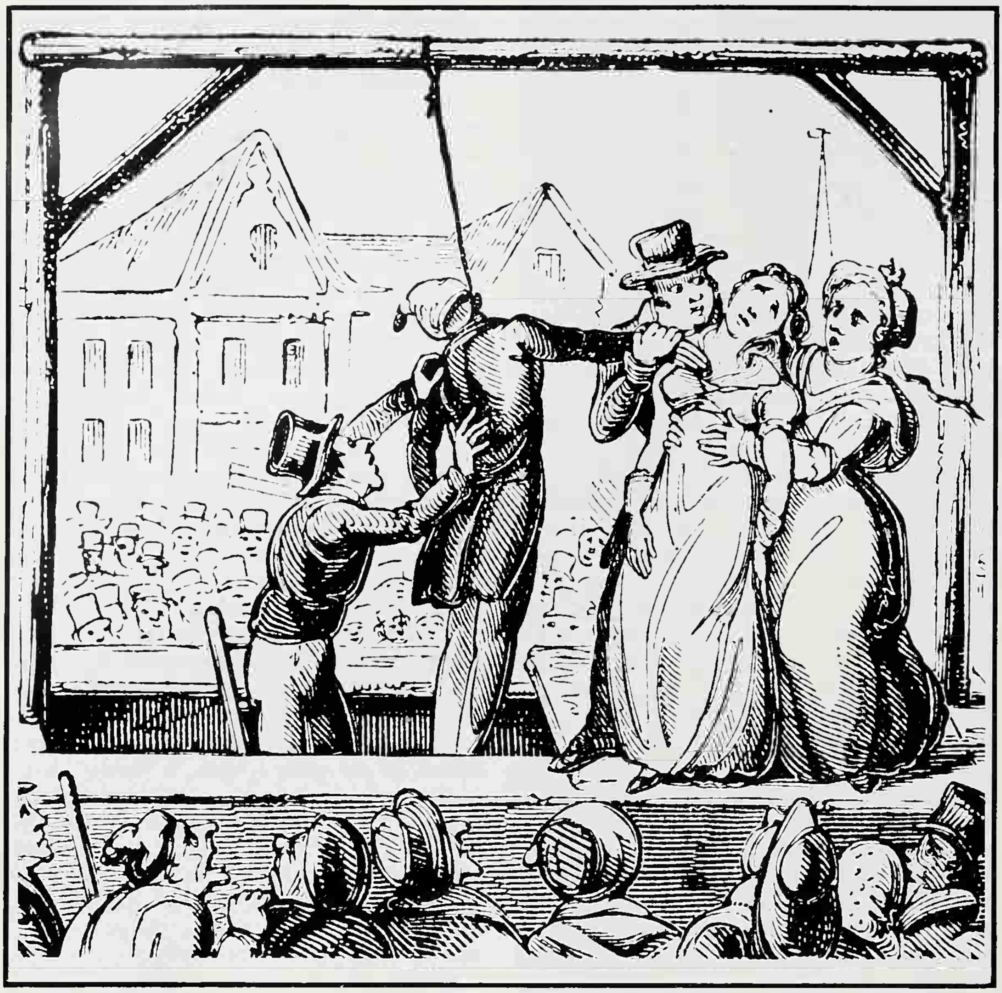
In peacetime, the degree of superstition which a man is likely to display is usually related to the riskiness of his occupation. Stockbrokers, whose financial lives are so often balanced upon a knife's edge of chance, have a strong tendency to consult clairvoyants, and American bankers are reputed to derive a sense of security from furtively touching the backs of passing hunchbacks. Out-and-out gamblers, whether at the roulette or card table, wear their superstitions almost as badges, displaying a fervent belief in lucky seats and hunches. But the perfect example of a truly superstitious profession is the theatre. The life of an actor is extremely insecure, and every theatrical production is a hazardous venture. In these circumstances many actors have a complete philosophy of superstitious practices, some of which must be as old as the profession itself. To stumble is an omen of forgetting one's lines. The final line of the play is never spoken in rehearsal as any anticipation of completion is an invitation to disaster. If a long thread of cotton is found on an actor's back, it means that a contract is on the way. An actor will frequently treasure some little object associated with a successful first night's performance, regarding it as a form of magical insurance.

Another trade which was originally encrusted with superstitious usages is that of the seaman. In the hazardous days of sail, the men on the big ships surrounded their lives with a complicated system of rituals and taboos (see SEA; SHIP). Today the situation has changed radically as the direct result of a century-long revolution in shipping. Long sea voyages are now relatively safe and in consequence deep-sea superstitions of all kinds have dwindled. On the other hand, among fishermen, whose lives continue to be at risk and whose incomes are precarious, the majority of the older sea superstitions retain much of their original force. A skipper will frequently refuse to put to sea should he discover his hatch upside down on boarding his craft; a bucket lost overboard is still interpreted as a sign from the fates that the ship is doomed.

Sporting Chance

It would appear to be the rule that if the stock of superstitious beliefs remains undiminished, the point of emphasis is continually shifting from one situation to another in accordance with the amount of anxiety experienced at any particular time. Today at the factory bench, for example, a threat of unemployment at once brings all the old wives' tales to the fore. Placing a pair of new shoes on a bench is now seen as a threat to one's job, whereas in more settled times it was interpreted as an omen of death, the shoes being required for that long journey to the underworld.

All competitive situations, whether at work or at play, tend to create anxiety and therefore provide a solid foundation for the growth of superstition. In sport this principle is often paramount. The traditional belief that there is luck in odd numbers



Harry Price Library

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Left Among the more gruesome of superstitions was the belief that the touch of a hanged man could cure wens and blemishes in women: scene at an execution in London, September 1814 Below Members of the Eccentric Club defy fate at a luncheon on Friday the 13th

prompts punters to place their bets on threes, sevens and nines. Jockeys have their lucky caps, cricketers their lucky bats and boots, and some footballers not only touch the goal-posts at the commencement of a match but have been known to prevent their wives from looking at the game on television. In most cases a lucky object acquires its 'supernatural reputation because of its association in the player's mind with some important success in the field. The cricketer who makes his century while wearing a particular shirt will often go on wearing it until it is almost reduced to tatters. Luck by association is the rule in sport as in all other kinds of activity.

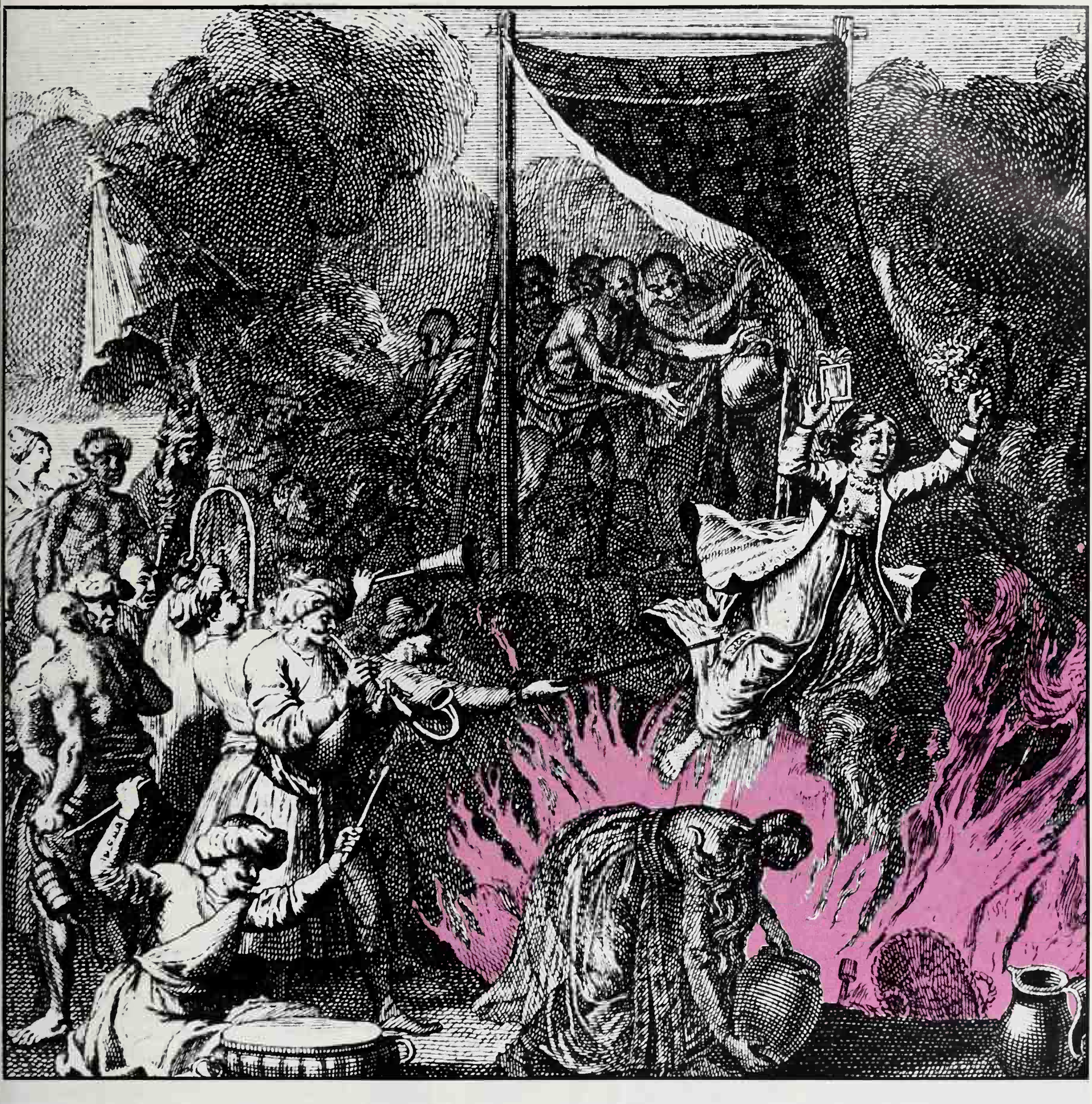
Any survey of the superstitious scene makes it clear that superstitions possess a powerful tendency to move with the times, changing in outward form although never in essence. Motorists advance down the motorways protected by lucky key-fobs, and automobile salesmen display a noticeable aversion to dealing in cars that have been involved in fatal accidents. Motor-cycle policemen and Hell's Angels alike believe it unlucky for their crash helmets to be touched by alien hands. Civil air pilots and even astronauts are reported to take amulets with them on their flights, while the computer operator is coming to believe that his machine has a life of its own.

Superstitious fears are likely to arise in anyone – irrespective of social class or nationality – who feels himself threatened by forces lying beyond the range of his power. The form of a particular superstition is determined by environmental and social factors, but the function of superstition itself seems to be unvarying.

Superstition may perhaps be defined as a form of personal magic which is used for the purpose of coming to terms with the unknown. By false analogy a particular course of action which has proved successful in the past is associated with some object worn or action carried out at the same time, which is then accorded a kind of talismanic quality. The object or action is then used again or repeated, in the expectation of achieving a similar result at another time. Negative superstition, which may be defined as the avoidance of certain acts with the object of preventing undesired contingencies, arises from a similar false association of ideas. In all this activity, however, can be detected an awareness of some law of cause and effect, but it is the cause and effect of the savage, not that of the scientific man, the rule of assumption rather than thought.

ERIC MAPLE

FURTHER READING: F. E. Planer, *Superstition* (Horizon, 1981); Gustav Jahoda, *The Psychology of Superstition* (Aronson, 1974); Eric Maple, *Superstition and the Superstitious* (W. H. Allen, London, 1971).



A Hindu widow leaps into the flames of her husband's funeral pyre; men with poles pinned the sati down if her courage failed her. Some believed that this sacrificial act expunged the sins of both husband and wife: 18th century engraving

Mansell Collection

To perish in flames with her dead husband as an act of purification was the duty of the high-caste Hindu widow; a practice which survived here and there, in defiance of the law, until as recently as the 1940s

SUTTEE

THE SELF-IMMOLATION of a Hindu widow on her husband's funeral pyre is described by the term *suttee*, more correctly spelt *sati*. The literal meaning of sati is 'a virtuous woman', but early European writers applied the term erroneously to the ritual burning of such a woman with her dead husband. The origin of the practice is not certain, but parallels are found in many ancient cultures. The kings of Ur, for example, were buried with their wives, attendants and possessions, so that in the next world they should have all the comforts they were used to on this earth. Similar customs prevailed among the ancient Chinese, among early Indo-European peoples and also among the nomads of Central Asia.

There is no direct reference to the burning of widows in the most ancient Indian scriptures, known as the *Rig-Veda*. A funeral hymn describes how the widow lies down on the pyre beside her dead husband, but she is then called back to the land of the living. A reference in the later *Atharva-Veda* suggests, however, that subsequently the burning of widows became common. The Greek accounts from the time of Alexander the Great's invasion of India (327–325 BC) contain references to the self-immolation of widows, and among the high Hindu castes the practice continued intermittently until the 19th century when the British authorities declared it illegal.

The earliest memorial to a sati is an inscription on a pillar dated 510 AD and similar monuments from later days are found in many parts of India. Some medieval writers declared that the sati by burning herself on her husband's pyre expunges both her own and her husband's sins, and that the two would enjoy millions of years of bliss in heaven. There was also the idea that the self-immolation of a widow would purify her own as well as her husband's family. If her husband had died far from home she was advised to take some article of his dress, tie it to her breast, and then ascend the funeral pyre. In theory the cremation of a sati was always voluntary, but social and family pressures to follow the custom may often have been irresistible, particularly in the case of high caste widows of warrior class.

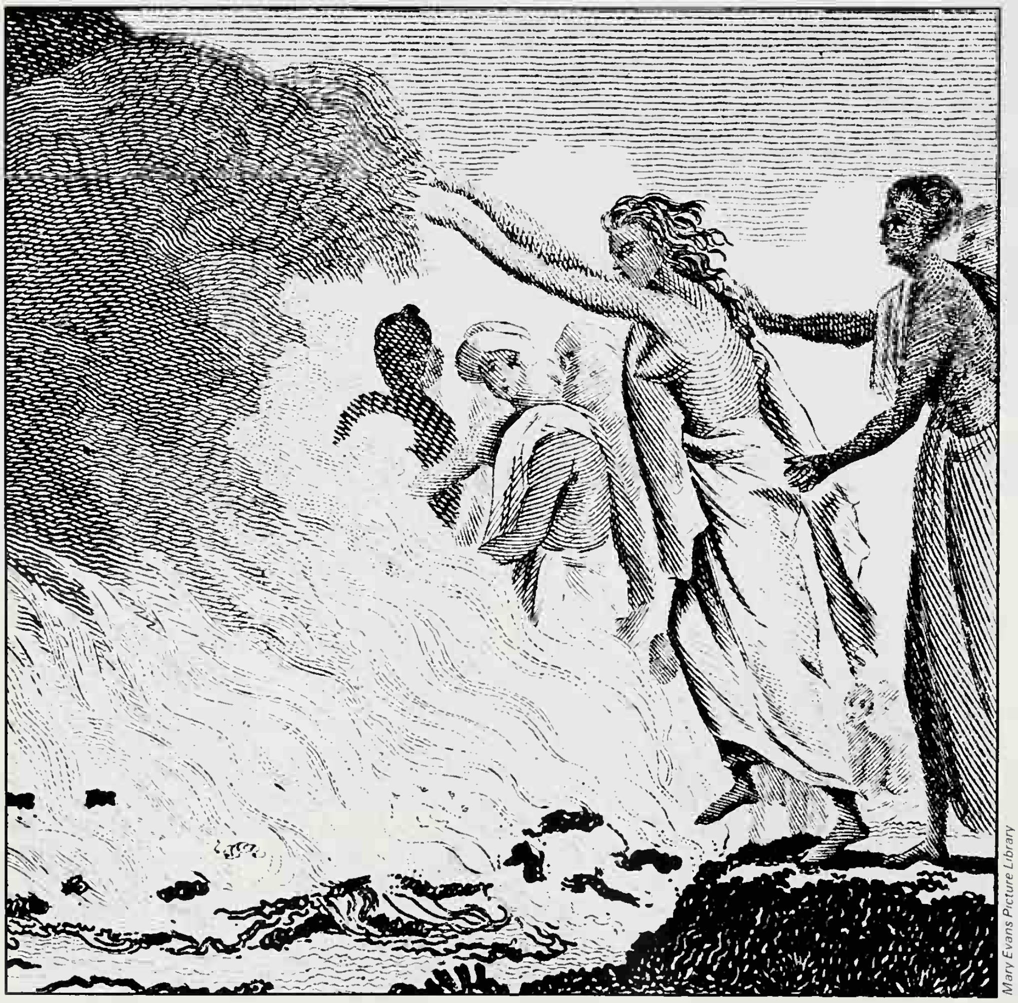
Criticisms of the custom were not unknown even in ancient times, and in the Middle Ages writers of tantric sects (see TANTRISM) even declared that a woman burning herself with her husband would go straight to hell. Yet, the fate of widows in orthodox Hindu families was unenviable, and women without young children may often have preferred a self-imposed death to a life of privation, scorn and domestic servitude in the house of unsympathetic kinsmen of a deceased husband.

The circumstances and methods of conducting the cremation varied. In northern India it was the custom for the sati on her way to the pyre to mark the chief gateway of a temple with the impression of her hand steeped in vermilion, or to impress her stained hand on a stone, forming marks which would afterwards be made permanent by chiselling. Stones bearing such marks were considered sacred, and a woman who chose self-immolation was revered as a divine figure. A blessing given by a sati on the way to her death was highly valued and her curses were feared. The actual cremation was accompanied by elaborate rites. In some parts of India it was customary for the widow to sit beside her husband's corpse in a straw hut erected on a pyre, which she finally set alight with a torch. Elsewhere she lay beside the corpse surrounded with inflammable materials, and if her courage failed her she was pinned down in the flames by men wielding long poles. In southern India a fire was kindled in a pit into which the widow had to leap.

The practice of self-immolation of women was particularly common among Rajputs, people from the present-day state of Rajasthan in north-west India. Not only did many Rajput widows burn themselves with their husband's corpse, but on the capture of a fortress many of the noble women burned themselves in the rite known as *Johar* in order to escape dishonour.

In many places in northern India, and particularly on the banks of rivers or tanks, small masonry shrines dedicated to satis may be seen. Such a shrine is often decorated with a carving in stone representing the husband and his faithful wife. Women come to such shrines to pray for male offspring or for the health of their husbands and children.

Detail from a 19th century engraving: a blessing given by a sati on her way to her death was highly valued and her curses were feared, for she was regarded as divine; the burning was accompanied by elaborate rites



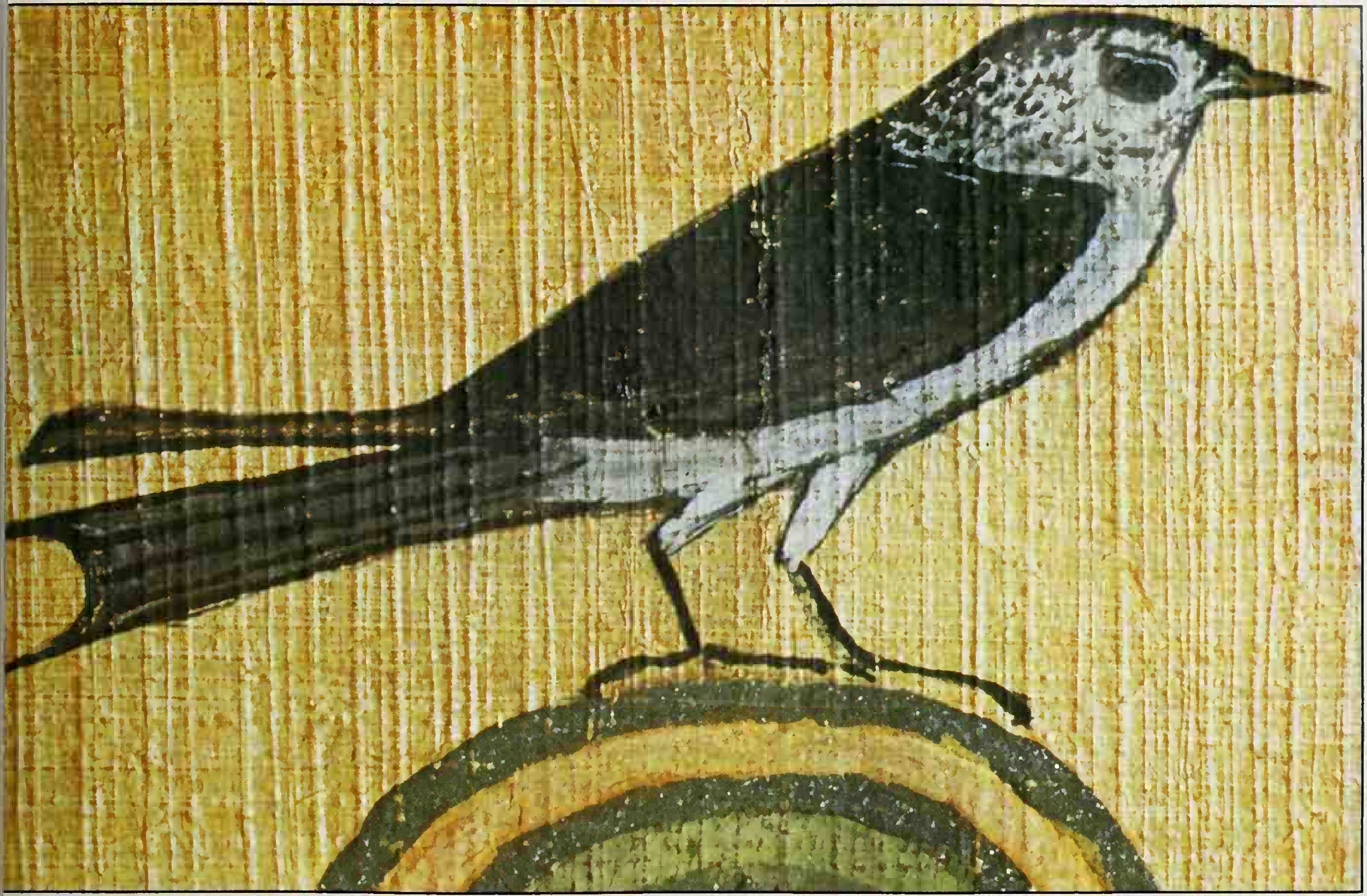
Mary Evans Picture Library

With Snakes to the Flames

The self-immolation of widows is paralleled by other instances of ritual suicide once practised in India. In the Punjab mothers were known to burn themselves with their dead children, and in the past it was not unusual for men to kill themselves in order to accompany a beloved lord and master to the next world. There are many historical references to ministers, courtiers and servants voluntarily ending their life after the death of a ruler, and those who sacrificed themselves in such a manner were held in high esteem. The cult of such heroes as well as that of women who chose the role of sati is closely linked with the whole idea of worshipping the sainted dead. Representations of snakes rising out of the masonry of sati memorials to receive the adoration of the living suggests such a connection with the cult of ancestral spirits. A legend tells how once upon a time in the Narbada River valley of central India, when the three widows of a man were burnt on his funeral pyre, two great snakes appeared and entered the flames to be burnt with them. The bystanders were convinced that these were two wives of the dead man in a previous birth, and when the memorial rite was performed it was done for six souls instead of four.

The prohibition of the burning of widows, though enacted during the period of British rule, was the result of a campaign by progressive Indians. A Hindu sect known as the Brahmo Samaj, which combined ethical doctrines derived from Christianity with traditional Indian beliefs, agitated for the abolition of the custom, and though vigorously opposed by orthodox Hindu opinion gained the support of the British authorities. In 1829 the custom then officially described as 'suttee' was prohibited in Bengal, and similar legislation soon followed in the provinces of Bombay and Madras. But in the independent princely states not affected by British legislation the practice continued unchecked, and there were cases of people from adjoining British territories going there to perform the rite. Gradually, several of the rulers of the larger states, such as Baroda and Indore, were persuaded to prohibit the immolation of widows, but resistance to the reformist movement was strong in Rajputana. The opposition to abolition was weakened, however, by a ruling from the chief Brahmin priest of Jaipur to the effect that the immolation of widows was less meritorious than the 'living suttee' of chastity and devotion. In 1846 several Rajput states prohibited the practice but as late as 1861 the cremation of widows openly took place in Udaipur (then a princely state). Secretly it continued very much longer, and in remote areas isolated cases of the immolation of widows occurred as late as the 1940s, though criminal proceedings were taken against those involved whenever a case came to the notice of the authorities.

C. VON FURER-HAIMENDORF



C. M. Dixon/British Museum

It was a common belief in many cultures that the human soul might leave its body in the form of a bird: Ani, a royal Egyptian scribe, is represented after death as a swallow, in the Theban Book of the Dead, c 1250 BC

SWALLOW

WHEN MAN BEGAN to erect solid buildings the swallows found that the eaves provided sheltered niches for their nests. An ancient Egyptian papyrus refers to a lovesick girl hearing the swallows early in the morning inviting her into the countryside. Greek writers often mentioned the bird which, in common with other European peoples, they looked upon as a harbinger of spring. And it was a Greek writer, Aristotle, who first wrote: 'One swallow does not make a summer.' A black-figured Greek vase now in the Vatican depicts an elderly man, a youth and a boy greeting the first swallow to appear in spring. The youth shouts 'Look, there's a swallow!,' the man cries 'By Heracles, so there is.' The boy exclaims 'There she goes,' and then, 'Spring has come.' In the 2nd century AD boys went from house to house on Rhodes singing:

> The swallow is here and a new year he brings,
> As he lengthens the days with the beats of his
> wings,
> White and black
> Are his belly and back.
>
> Pay his tribute once more
> With cheese in its basket,
> And pork from your store,
> And wine from its flasket,
> And eggs from your casket, and bread
> when we ask it.

A springtime swallow song is still sung in some areas of Greece. The Greeks had a low opinion of the swallow's song which they likened to a chattering in barbarous tongues. In spite of its joyous spring associations, the swallow became associated with wretchedness in the story of Philomela and Procne (see NIGHTINGALE). In this myth, Tereus cut out the tongue of his wife Procne lest she should divulge that he had violated her sister Philomela. Whereupon the gods transformed all three into birds: Tereus was turned into a hoopoe, Philomela into a nightingale and Procne into a swallow. Ever since, the swallow has only been able to utter incoherent twitterings.

Augurs claimed that they could interpret the bird's call, and inferences were drawn from its behaviour. The fluttering of a swallow around the head of Alexander the Great was regarded as a portent of tragedy, but returning swallows were considered to predict the safe return of Dionysus. Greek and Latin writers mention that weather was forecast from the swallow's flight; and throughout Europe low-flying swallows are still regarded, with some justification, as an indication of bad weather.

Observations of swallows flying low over lakes and rivers may have inspired the Chinese to throw swallows into water when they prayed for rain. The associations between swallows, rain and springtime growth were responsible for offerings being made to the genius of the house on the day when the swallows returned. According to one poem, heaven decreed that the swallow should give birth to the Shang Dynasty. Its egg was said to have caused the pregnancy of the ancestress of the Shang line.

The swallow has long been associated with gifts of healing. The white or red swallow-stones which were believed to be secreted in the bellies of the nestlings had medicinal value. During the Middle Ages, this belief became elaborated into the notion that the swallow fetches a pebble from the sea-shore to restore the sight of its fledglings. Confusion apparently arose between the swallow-stone legend and the ancient belief that the swallow brings to its nest a herb which cures the young swallows of their blindness. Parts of the bird were widely believed to cure various diseases: snake bite, epilepsy, rabies, and so on. Its droppings cured diphtheria and turned hair grey; and mud from its nest was a remedy for erysipelas (a fever accompanied by inflammation of the skin).

A Drop of Devil's Blood

In general the swallow has been viewed as a helpful, propitious bird, but as is often the case with other lucky birds, it has in some localities been regarded with suspicion. In regions of France and Hungary it was said that if a swallow flew under a cow's belly it would give bloody milk and in Scotland it was reputed to have a drop of the Devil's blood in its veins. Yorkshire folk considered it a death omen when a swallow came down the chimney. If the first swallow seen by a girl in Czechoslovakia was alone she would be married within the year but if she caught sight of a pair she would remain unmarried.

It is widely believed that swallows should be kindly treated, and that ill luck befalls those who harm them. The Tyrolese say that if you destroy a swallow's nest your own house will be burnt down. In France it was believed that if a man robbed a swallow's nest his horse would go lame. The Chinese revere the bird, and although they use most organisms either as food or medicine, they do not molest the swallows nesting under the low eaves in city streets.

The helpful swallow plays a prominent part in Christian legends. The Swedes say that it hovered over the Cross crying '*Svala! Svala!*', 'Cheer up! Cheer up!'. The Norwegian version is that it twittered 'Console him!'. In France it is said that the swallow picked off the Crown of Thorns ignoring the wounds made in her breast by the spines. Ever since, the swallow has borne stains of blood on her breast. Similar stories are told of the robin and crossbill, both of which have red breasts. According to another French legend magpies pricked Christ's feet and head with thorns while he was resting in a wood, but swallows came and extracted them. Because of this the magpie has been hated and forced to build its nest in tall trees, but the swallow breeds in safety in man's dwellings.

In English folk rhymes the swallow is included among sacred birds:

The robin and the wren,
Are God Almighty's cock and hen;
The martin and the swallow
Are the two next birds that follow.

The disappearance of swallows in autumn and their reappearance in spring caused speculation and gave rise to one of the oldest ornithological fallacies, that they had hibernated in crevices or even under water. Aristotle mentions this belief which was substantiated by natural historians up to the 19th century.

E. A. ARMSTRONG

Swami

Or svami, a Hindu holy man and teacher: in certain religious and ascetic orders, title of initiates who have reached the highest stage of spiritual progress and have renounced the world: a popular term in the West for almost any Hindu adept, teacher or occultist.

Camera Press

The belief that the swan sings while dying has a long history endorsed by poets down the ages: Shakespeare wrote in Othello, *'I will play the swan and die in music'*

SWAN

SEVERAL CHARACTERISTICS account for the swan's importance in mythology and folklore: they are among the largest birds of the Northern Hemisphere and, except for the Australian black swan, all swans have conspicuous white plumage. Moreover, except for the mute swan which makes a remarkable musical sound with its wings as it flies, the other species – the whooper, trumpeter and bewick – utter loud vocal calls.

Engravings and designs from the Old Stone Age onwards of long-necked birds resembling the goose or swan indicate that such species had a magico-religious significance in various ancient cultures. The Middle Bronze Age Urnfield folk of Central Europe and other later cultures incorporated such long-necked birds in designs which included a sun disc, showing that these birds were associated with solar beliefs. As swans and geese fly high and also frequent water they became linked as well with ideas about growth and fertility (see GOOSE). Swans appeared over northern tundra areas when the days were lengthening, the sun's path in the heavens was getting higher, and the snows were melting and the flowers appearing. Thus swans are thought not only to accompany spring but to help usher it in. Even now, some of the inhabitants of the woodlands of northern Asia erect poles with wooden effigies of flying swans near sacrificial platforms; below they place carved wooden models of fish, symbolizing the powers of sky, earth and water.

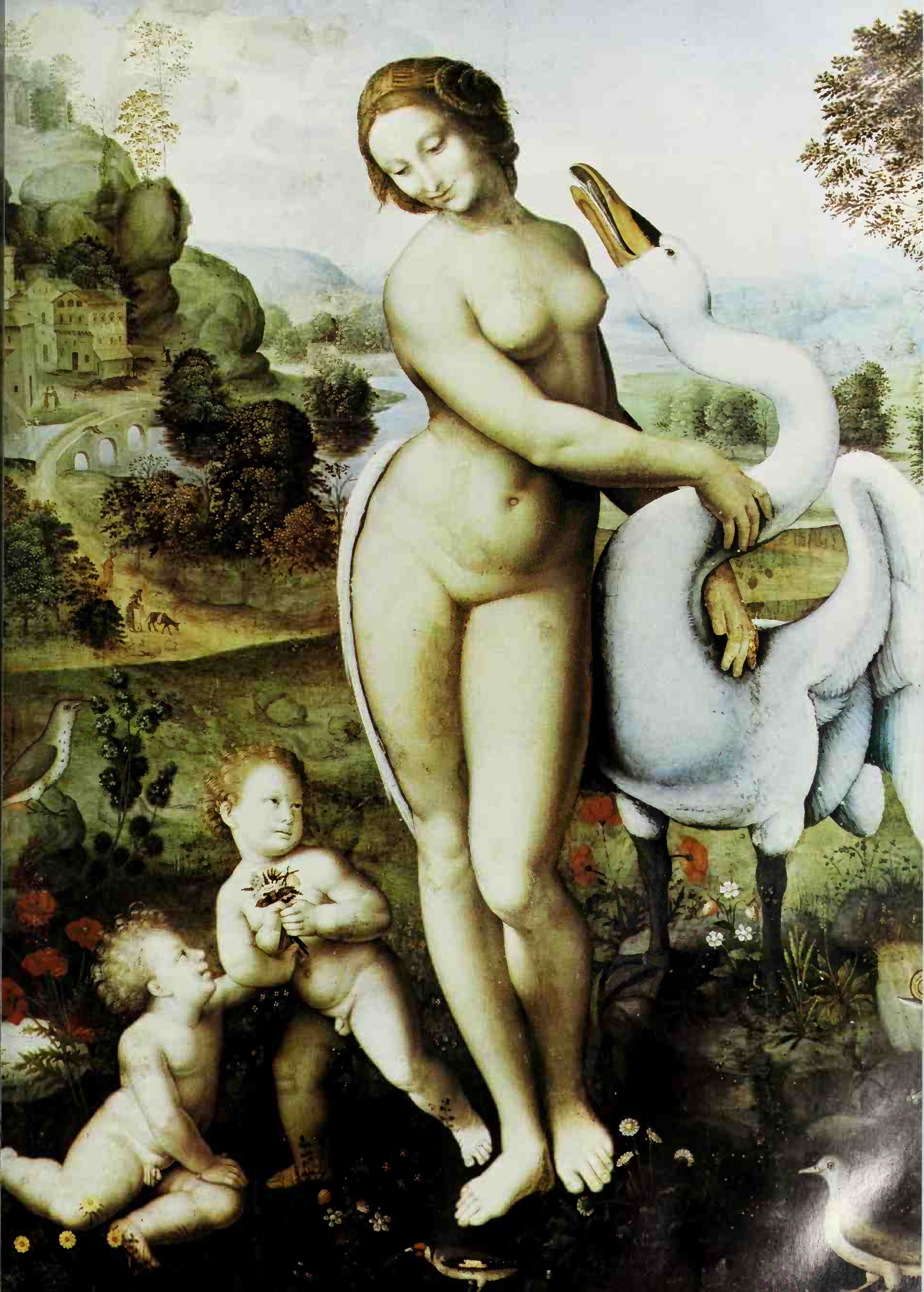
Since myths in which people are transformed into swans are ancient and widespread, they evidently hark back to primitive modes of thought in which the distinctions between gods, men and animals were blurred. Aeschylus, the Greek playwright, mentions swan maidens; Aphrodite was represented in art riding on a swan or goose, and Ovid tells of Cycnus being turned into a swan by his father Apollo. Both Apollo and Venus rode in chariots drawn by swans. Zeus was said to have turned himself into a swan to couple with Leda. The sacred character of the swan is indicated by the belief held in areas as far apart as Siberia and Ireland that to kill a swan brings misfortune or death. In County Mayo the souls of virtuous maidens were said to dwell in swans.

For Love of a Swan Maiden

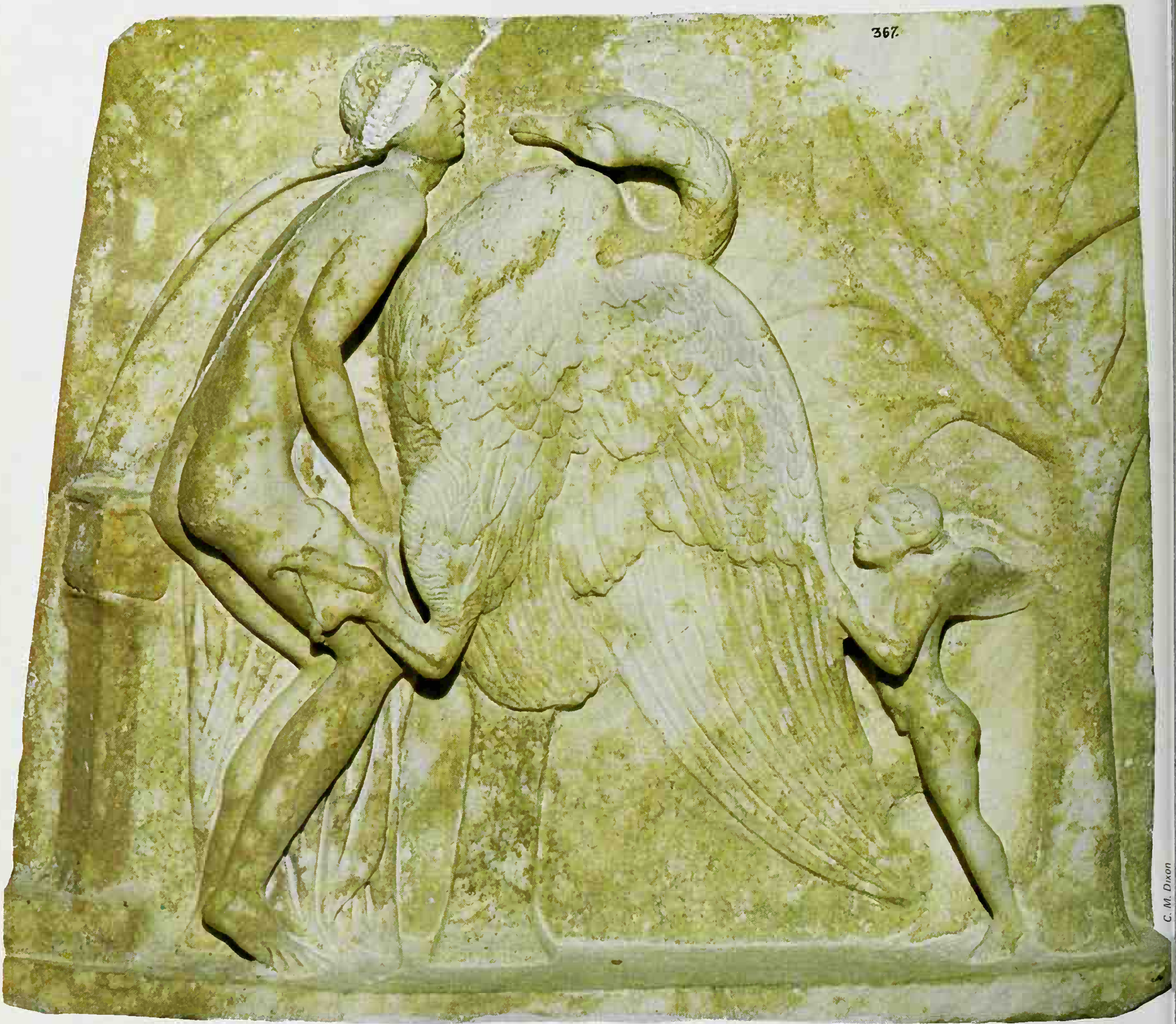
The most widespread swan transformation myth tells of a man who sees a flock of swans alight by the water, and watches them discard their feather garments, revealing themselves as beautiful maidens. He steals the robes of one of the swan maidens and lives happily with her until one day she finds the garments, puts them on and disappears. In an Irish account dating from the 8th century, Angus, the son of the Dagda, 'the good god', falls in love with the swan maiden Caer who appears to him in a dream. On visiting Loch Bel Dracon at the time of the great Celtic festival of *Samain* (1 November) he sees a flock of 150 swans, each pair linked with a silver chain, and among them his beloved Caer wearing a golden chain and coronet. When he calls to her she leaves the flock and he, too, takes swan form. Together they circle the loch three times and, chanting magical music which puts to sleep all who hear it for three days and nights, they fly to the royal palace. Among the Buriats of Siberia who regard the eagle as their paternal forbear and the swan as the mother of their race, a swan maiden tale is told which has close affinities with Irish stories. There are also Indian versions, and in Malaya and Siam the theme forms the basis of a dramatic performance. It appears to have inspired the Japanese Noh play, *The Robe of Feathers*.

Christian elements introduced into swan transformation stories are obviously later embellishments; this confirms that these stories date from pre-Christian times. In a Russian ballad, a swan maiden declares

The size of the swan and its flight high in the sky implies power, and its association with water implies fertility: Zeus turned himself into a swan to father children on Leda; *Leda and the Swan*, school of Leonardo



Myths in which gods or humans turn into swans are ancient and widespread, reflecting primitive concepts that blurred the distinction between gods, men and animals: Roman limestone relief of Leda and the swan, Crete



C. M. Dixon

that she will not marry the hero until he has been baptized, and a version of the beautiful Irish tale of the Children of Lir relates that after centuries had elapsed during which Fionnuala and her brothers, transformed into swans, swam the Irish sea, they were restored to human form in a very weak condition, and were baptized just before they died.

The belief that the swan sings while dying has a long history. Although Pliny contradicted this tradition it has been transmitted down the ages, and has been endorsed by poets almost up to our own times. This story may also have originated in the North. Although dying swans do not sing, a flock of bewick swans in full cry produces a resonant, mysterious, melodious tumult which seems to pervade the whole landscape. Chaucer refers in *The Parliament of Fowles* to 'swan-song'. Shakespeare wrote in *Othello* 'I will play the swan, and die in music', and in *The Merchant of Venice* 'He makes a swan-like end, fading in music'. Drayton in *Polyolbion* referred to 'swans who only sing in death' and Byron made the sad request:

> Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
> Where nothing but the waves and I
> May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
> There swan-like, let me sing and die.

Yet another poet to make use of this familiar theme was Alfred Lord Tennyson, in *The Dying Swan*.

The notion that swans are linked together or wear chains is also ancient. I
As You Like It Celia says:

> And whereso'er we went, like Juno's swans,
> Still we went coupled and inseparable.

In Greek art, swans are depicted harnessed; a French medieval legend refers to si
brothers and sisters whose transformatio
into swans depends on the possession o
golden chains and in Grimm's tale of *Th*
Six Swans a golden chain is placed aroun
the neck of the swan maiden. After Edward
had knighted his son at Westminster tw
swans with trappings of gold were brough
into the palace. The stories of the Knight o
the Swan both in France and in German
also embody such traditions.

E. A. ARMSTRON

SWASTIKA

THE WORD SWASTIKA is derived from the Sanskrit, *svastika,* which means well-being, good fortune, luck. Although the figure bearing this name has been extensively used as a decoration or mystical symbol in many parts of the world from prehistoric times onwards, the history of its origin and world-wide dispersion is obscure. Known as the *Hakenkreuz* (hooked cross) in German, its association with Hitler's Germany is universally familiar and the symbol is therefore generally equated with all the negative features of the Third Reich: antisemitism (including genocide), aggression, persecution and terror (see also CROSS).

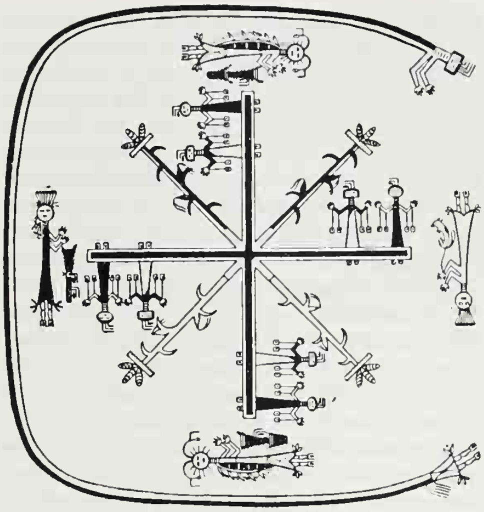
Both before and after Hitler's rise to power in 1933, German archeologists and cultural historians studied every conceivable aspect of swastika symbolism, although without reaching definite conclusions. The subject inevitably attracted the attention of 'lunatic fringe' researchers, who went to irrational lengths to establish that it represented an ancient Germanic and therefore acceptably Nordic symbol.

Guido von List (see LIST), for example, confidently proclaimed that the runic equivalent of the letter G was a disguised swastika and quoted the *Edda* to prove that this rune had a secret and mystical significance for ancient Scandinavian bards.

For many, including List, the swastika also had a cosmic meaning, for example as a 'sun wheel', symbolizing eternal rebirth and eternal movement. One Germanic enthusiast asserted that it was an essentially Christian symbol until the Church adopted the crucifix in the 6th century. Friedrich Döllinger proposed in his book *Baldur und Bibel*: 'The hooked cross, also known as "Sun wheel", can be found as a common holy symbol with all Germanic peoples, in the Near East as in Crete, alluding to the religion of Odin (Wotan).' Ludwig Fahrenkrog (see NEO-PAGAN GERMAN CULTS), the founder of one of the many Germanic religious sects – non-Christian but not always specifically pagan – that flourished in Germany after the early 1900s, supposed that the form 卐 suggested 'cessation' or 'away from God', while its counterpart 卍 meant 'genesis' or 'to God'. Here he followed contemporary Theosophical concepts which were based upon Buddhist traditions.

The date when the swastika first became associated with the ideology of the German *völkisch* movement, emotionally inward-looking and intensely nationalist, is uncertain. The few available clues point in the direction of the Austrian Pan-Germans, that is, followers of Schönerer, in the 1870s. Guido von List, for instance, who was close to Schönerer, was probably speculating about the swastika as a Germanic symbol long before it became identified with völkisch groups in the Third Reich.

In Germany, Wilhelm Schwaner (b. 1863), the publisher of one of the earliest völkisch periodicals (*Der Volkserzieher,* 1897) displayed a swastika on the titlepage of his publication, which was intended to inculcate truly Germanic (that is, völkisch) sentiments among its readers.



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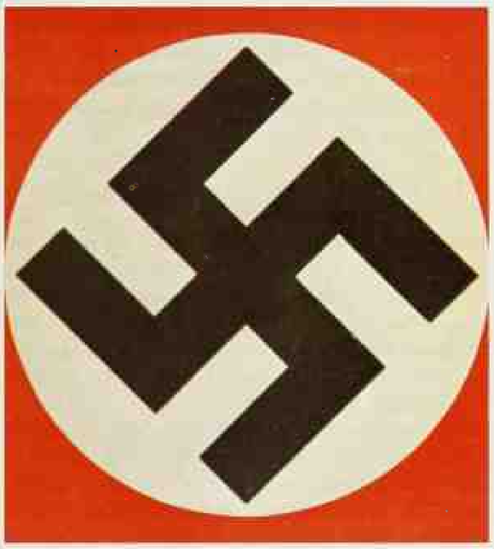
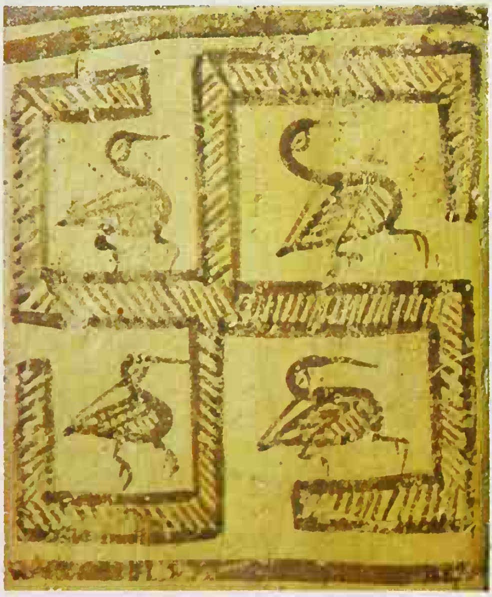


The swastika has been used as a decoration or mystical symbol in many parts of the world *Top* Swastika pattern of the Navaho Indians *Above* Adopted by the Nazis as their party badge, the swastika came to stand for Hitler's Germany in general, and for Nazi racial policies in particular, since it was chosen on the mistaken ground that it was a 'Nordic' emblem: 'few other symbols have become so widely associated with evil' *Below* Swastika on a pot found at Argos in Greece, c 8th century BC



C. M. Dixon

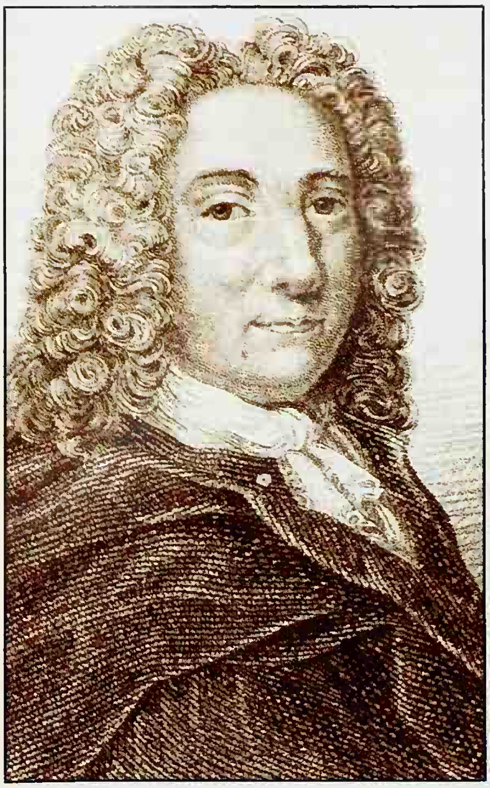
By 1912 half a dozen or more völkisch groups, some of them quite large, were using the emblem on the titlepages of their periodicals and on their stationery. It had also begun to appear on private letter-headings, either printed, rubber-stamped or drawn with a pen. This insistent exhibition of the swastika was intended to advertise an emotional and complete identification with truly völkisch sentiments, and these invariably included rigorously antisemitic attitudes. The swastika had by this time become a symbol of recognition for like-minded people. A number of firms, such as Ecklöh at Ludenscheid in Westphalia, began to manufacture swastika badges, tie pins, amulets and belts or buckles incorporating the device.

The famous pre-1914 youth movement, the *Wandervögel,* inevitably encountered the swastika by way of various völkisch writers and periodicals and the symbol was therefore completely familiar to the generation that fought in the First World War. Soon after Germany's defeat in 1918 it was adopted by various paramilitary Freikorps units, which included many ex-students and members of the *Wandervögel.* The famous Erhardt Brigade, which participated in the liberation of Munich from the Communists in April 1919, arrived at the Bavarian capital singing their marching song which began with the words: 'Hooked cross on steel helmets . . .' The swastika was soon no longer an exclusively romantic völkisch symbol but became associated with the 'national revolutionary' right-wing opposition to the Weimar Republic.

Hitler's National Socialist German Workers' Party had its roots in Anton Drexler's German Workers' Party, a minute völkisch group founded in Munich in January 1919. Hitler joined the latter in September 1919 and was largely responsible for re-naming it as the National Socialist German Workers' Party in February 1920. When Hitler and the Nazis adopted the swastika as their party emblem they therefore chose a symbol that already reflected all or most of the tenets of National Socialist ideology, and antisemitism in particular.

The form in which the Nazis used the swastika was designed by Dr Friedrich Krohn, a dentist who had belonged to various völkisch groups, including the Germanen Order (see GERMANEN ORDER), before 1914. He was aware of the Buddhist theory that the 'anti-clockwise' swastika signified 'fortune and well-being' and made his first design accordingly. It was shown to Hitler and others. The majority readily accepted Krohn's arguments but Hitler insisted that the clockwise alternative be adopted – some would say with disastrous consequences. The Party flag, badge and armband, all based upon Krohn's design, were in official use by the summer of 1920. Almost exactly 25 years later the swastika became a symbol of shame and defeat in Germany. It is probably true to suggest that few other symbols have become so widely associated with evil.

SWEDENBORG



Mary Evans

A scientist turned visionary, Swedenborg claimed that the real meaning of the scriptures was revealed to him through his conversations with God and the angels

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG was born in Stockholm on 29 January 1688, the second son of the Lutheran Bishop of Skara, who had himself once been a professor at the University of Uppsala. Emanuel's father had changed his name from Swedberg when his family was ennobled in 1719. He was a remarkably learned and saintly man who was to have a longlasting influence on his son Emanuel.

From the first, Emanuel showed great promise in his scientific studies and, after graduating from Uppsala, travelled in Britain, Holland and Germany, pursuing his investigations. In England he met and was befriended by the astronomers Sir Edmund Halley and John Flamsteed, and on his return to Sweden had already established such a reputation that, in 1716, King Charles XII made him a special assessor to the Royal College of Mines. This work so absorbed him that he turned down the chance to follow in his father's footsteps as a professor at Uppsala, in order to continue with the practical work associated with the mines.

In 1718, he invented a means of transporting boats overland for 14 miles. While still a student, he had been concerned in 'a plan for a certain ship which, with its men, was to go under the surface of the sea and do great damage to the fleet of the enemy'. He had designed an air-gun with a magazine which could fire 60 or 70 shots without reloading and he had even busied himself with an attempt to design a flying machine.

Yet it was not as an inventor that he gained his first international triumph. In 1734, Swedenborg produced a three-volume work *Opera Philosophica et Mineralia,* in which he developed his theory of 'nebular hypothesis' to account for the formation of planets, which predates the work of Kant and the French astronomer, the Marquis de Laplace, and is often erroneously attributed to them. Publication proceeded apace. In 1740 *Oeconomia Regni Animalis*, an anatomical work, was produced in Amsterdam; in 1743 *Miscellaneous Observations on Geology and Mineralogy* was published in Leipzig, and in 1744 he wrote, *On the infinite and final cause of Creation*, in which he attempted to discuss the relationship between the soul and the body. All these were major works of importance to the several branches of science to which they were addressed, yet all had the germs of his later religious preoccupation. Nevertheless, it was not until 1745, with the publication of *Worship and the Love of God*, that religion became his one and only concern.

No Flight of Fancy

His life became totally taken up with his religious work so that in 1747, at the age of 59, he resigned his assessorship and took a pension of half-pay so that he could devote himself to the new revelations. But he was in no sense a spiritist, for he believed that he had held conversations with these heavenly beings while still being very much aware of his surroundings and in much the same way that he might talk with another human being. His mysticism was not the mysticism of the trance or of the seance – it was a full-blooded avowal of his regular direct communication with beings from heaven. His religious writings are the record of these communications and he makes no concessions.

He was aware of the scepticism that such extraordinary claims would arouse, and in his first theological work he admitted: 'I am well aware that many persons will insist that it is impossible for anyone to converse with spirits and with angels during his lifetime in the body; many will say that such intercourse must be mere fancy; some, that I have invented such relations in order to gain credit; whilst others will make other objections. For all these, however, I care not, since I have seen, heard and felt.'

For statements of this kind to have any credence, it is important to remember that Swedenborg was neither a dreamer, nor an ascetic with little experience of the world, but a practical applied scientist who had preferred the real business of mining to becoming the Professor of Astronomy in the University of Uppsala.

Swedenborg's theological works are not easily read and they are certainly not the products of a slapdash mystical enthusiast. Just as in his earlier days he had learned about watch-making by apprenticing himself to a watch-maker, so he set about studying theology, becoming well-skilled in Greek and Hebrew and in the standard commentaries. Although his work was all based upon his own direct mystical experience of God, he did not neglect scholarship, and the large volumes, written in Latin, were intended for the serious student and were in no sense considered as the means of popularizing a new religion.

Despite the enormous claims made in his writings, Swedenborg remained throughout his life a modest and simple person, working enormously hard, never marrying, and without any intention of founding a new sect, believing that his followers could be of any denomination.

'God is a Man'

What then were the special doctrines which he taught, and how did he make his influence felt? The key to it all is in his belief that he was a divinely-appointed instrument of God's revelation to man. He put no special gloss on Christianity, except incidentally, for it was his view that his writings fulfilled the New Testament story, just as the gospels had fulfilled that of the Old Testament. He thus approached the gospels as one with superior knowledge. Swedenborg believed that his scholarship was informed by his own direct contact with God. His spiritual world was not seen through an inspired individual approach to scripture which Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, claimed as her contribution; nor was it seen as the result of the miraculous discovery of a new book of revelations, like the Book of Mormon; but it was revealed to him personally by God himself, who had led him along the paths of heaven, enabling him to talk directly to the angels. Indeed, Swedenborg spoke as if heaven and its inhabitants were his 'second home'. He knows them as he knows human beings and his knowledge enables him to maintain that man's real self is in form exactly as is his physical body, and if it had not been for the Fall, the body would have been sloughed off like a snake-skin. Instead, men need to die before they move on to a higher place. So important is this concept of humanness that Swedenborg continually emphasizes that it is only through man's own eyes that he can see God, that God exists only in the terms that man can see him, and that those terms are human terms.

This position undoubtedly comes from Swedenborg's reliance on his visions, and in these, God certainly does appear as a man. Of course, he would admit that God in his essence is unknowable, but insists that it is part of the essential God to be known in human form. It would be misleading, says Swedenborg, for us to think about God in human symbols if those symbols were not more than mere forms, but instead they must be an essential part of the reality of God himself. This explains the otherwise baffling comment: 'God is a man'. It cannot to taken totally literally and yet it is not merely symbolic. There is a real sense in which God shares the human form.

Swedenborg retained the doctrine of the Trinity, but twisted it slightly to fit in with the experience of his vision. The Father is absolute – God in his essence, unconditionally, worthy to be called Jehovah. When Jehovah determined to save mankind, he assumed the humanity of the Son. That humanity was complete, with all its defects and all its blemishes. Thus God took on the ignorance of the child, was tempted with real temptations, which played upon real human desires and weaknesses. Like all humanity, the humanity of the Son could reach towards perfection – he was not, as in orthodox Christianity, perfect God and perfect Man.

The redemption of the world was the mystical redemption of this humanity becoming perfect and thus reaching to the Divine Father and reuniting the now perfect humanity with him who is perfect Divinity. This example makes it possible for all men to come to the Father.

Staircase to Heaven and Hell

All this is based upon a very special doctrine of creation which acknowledges man as the highest form of life on earth, but does not see him as created. Man is a form which is capable of receiving the life which constantly flows into him from God. Life is, in fact, Love-Wisdom, and this was received gladly before the Fall, when man accepted the harmony with God. Once he began to ignore the fact that his life came from God, then he had to stand alone. God did not leave him without a help to perfection, but instead provided him with the old dispensation, which led him towards a stage at which he was able to receive the revelation of God's human form. God did not become man, but merely clothed his divinity in man's form. This revelation is to be found in the New Testament, and it in turn has been elucidated by the direct communication of God with Emanuel Swedenborg.

Once again, returning to this direct revelation, Swedenborg *saw* heaven and hell. He also saw the intermediate place to which we go at death and from which we move, as our spirit leads us towards perfection or destruction. For those on the upward 'escalator', the approach towards God is inevitable. For those on the downward, the Devil is reached by easy stages. Swedenborg describes the spiritual world, with its spiritual patterns of all that there is in the material world, and he calls this vision the Second Coming of Christ. For him, the Advent is not a physical return, but the spiritual vision of Christ in his true surroundings. This vision comes to us all as we near perfection and pass to that state of spiritual vision which Swedenborg reached and upon which all his religious writings are based.

The revelation which God makes to man is, in fact, a kind of distillation of the Word which is found in God himself. There is a great danger in revealing to unready minds the full force of this truth and therefore the Bible contains a 'sifted-down' version of the Word which has descended until it has reached the level at which man can understand it. Of course on other planets, says Swedenborg, there are beings far brighter than man, for whom revelation has been presented in more direct a form. Yet in the sifted state in which the scriptures reach us, they make a direct appeal to the spirit of man, who has the capacity to understand and search out the real meanings contained within them.

This enables us to see that there is among the books in the Bible, a true canon of books which are really the Word, and which can be read for their spiritual meaning, and some others which are merely devotional aids. This view allowed Swedenborg to concentrate his work on the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament); Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel; I and II Kings; the Psalms, and most of the prophets. He also accepted the four gospels and the Apocalypse as of this specially divine nature. Their real meaning was revealed to him in his understanding which came from contact with the other world, and from his direct conversations with spirits and with God.

From this understanding, Swedenborg was able to see that the Atonement did not reconcile God with man, but made it possible for man to relearn the way to union with God – a way he had lost through choosing to love other than God at the Fall. When Christ had shown this way, he put off all the weaknesses of humanity and put on the divine humanity, given him by Jehovah. This was the glorification which is so much a part of Swedenborgian philosophy.

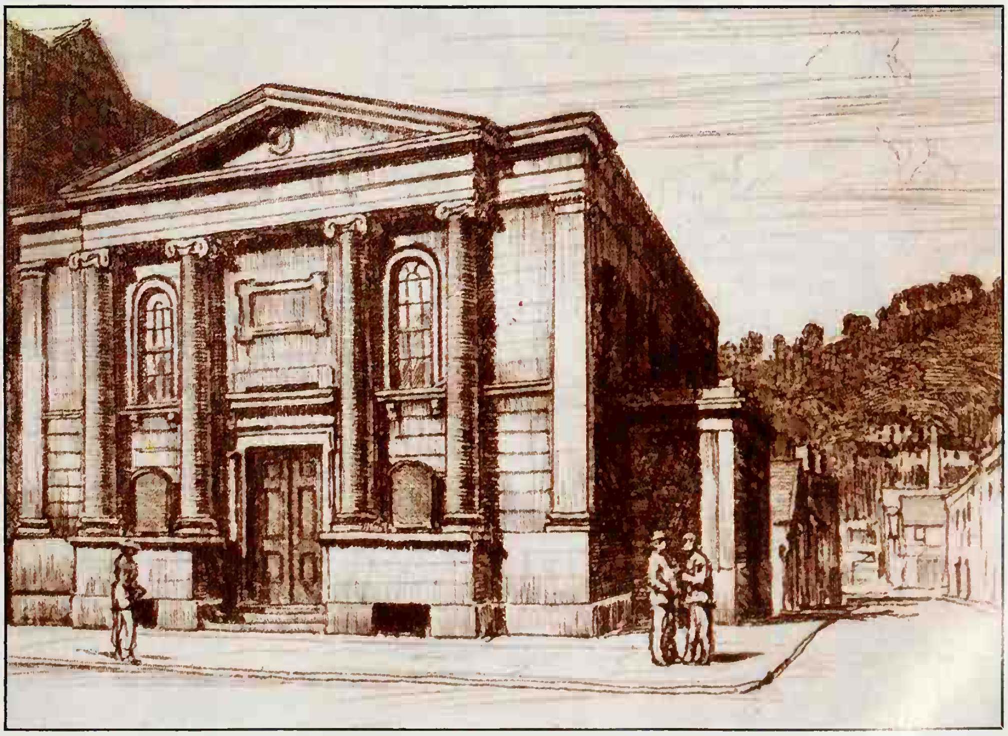
A Challenge to the Intellect

Now a knowledge of the truth is to be found in the Church. It is this knowledge that shows the way back to God. The Church is the true Church in so far as it has the truth. Therefore the founding of the Swedenborgian Church – or the New Church, as its adherents prefer – does not imply that other Churches are wrong; it is merely to help to point the way and to complete the revelation which may already be seen by people in other Churches. Nor is it the final revelation, for no doubt God may wish to show more of himself when the time is ripe. Swedenborgians claim, therefore, to be one of God's instruments, guided by the direct revelations made to Emanuel Swedenborg by God and his angels. These revelations they believe to be true, but in no way unique or exhaustive. They are not easy to assimilate, for the truths are theologically complicated and unarresting to the ordinary person, yet they have seized upon the minds of some great intellects. Much of William Blake's work, for instance, is imbued with the Swedenborgianism he embraced and then left behind. Despite his satire on Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* – which Blake called *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* – he continued to be inspired by the directness of the revelations of a real other world which is the hallmark of Swedenborg's message (see BLAKE).

In our own day, Helen Keller, who was born blind and deaf, wrote of her love for the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, 'If people would only begin to read Swedenborg's books with at first a little patience, they would soon be reading them with pure joy.' Miss Keller recognized that her hero was at first not easy to understand, and it is certainly true that for most people he does not get any easier even upon closer acquaintance, yet for some, he does appear to 'bring men by a wondrous way to God's city of light'.

His appeal is not universal. The New Church has never been very large, and its adherents have been few. Swedenborg presupposes a dedication to heavy reading. It would be surprising if the God who appeals to all men should have chosen so esoteric a character to continue his revelations made manifest in the carpenter's son. Nevertheless, here is obviously a mighty mind at work – a mind which was convinced of its personal and direct contact with God and which set out to describe that contact for the enlightenment of an inevitably dedicated readership.

JOHN SELWYN GUMMER



The founding of the Swedenborgian Church, or New Church, 'does not imply that other Churches are wrong: it is merely to help to point the way and to complete the revelation which may already be seen by people in other Churches'; etching of the New Church, Bath

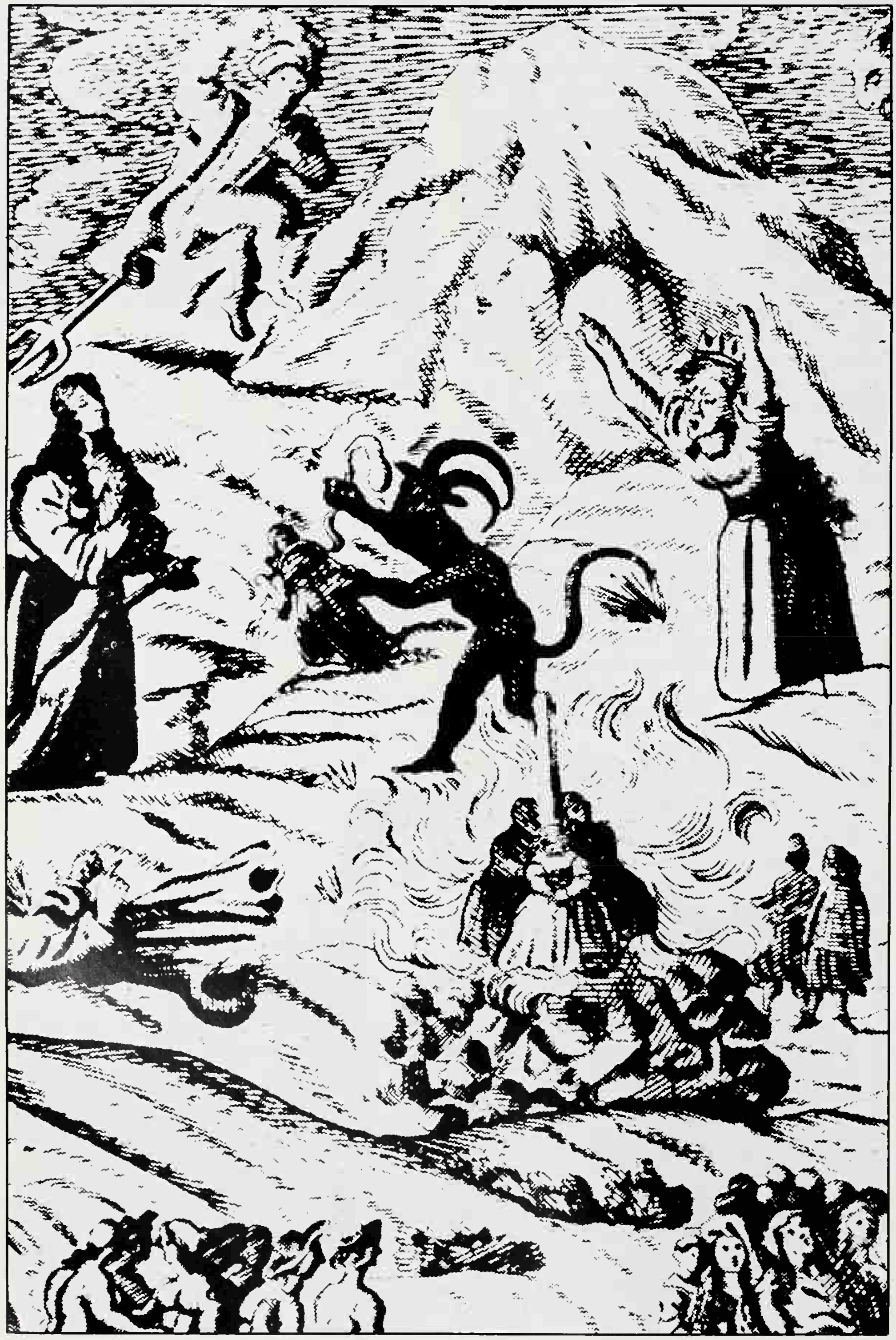
SWEDISH WITCHCRAFT

BY CONTRAST with Germany, France, England and Scotland, the Scandinavian countries were comparatively free of organized witch hunts. But that fear of witches existed and could arouse hysteria and panic is shown by the case of the witches of Mora in Sweden, who were accused of taking children to a mysterious place called the Blocula and there enrolling them in the service of the Devil.

In July 1668 the Lutheran pastor of Elfdale in central Sweden, an area with a suitably evocative name in view of what was to happen, reported to his bishop that a girl named Gertrude Svensen had learned the art of magical incantation from a servant, Marit Jonsdotter, and had stolen several children of the district for 'the evil genius', the Devil. Her activities had been detected by a boy of 15, Eric Ericson, who also accused several others of stealing children for the Devil. One of them, a woman of 70, admitted that the accusation was true, but the others denied it. Officials of the royal government had investigated and discovered that the accused had stolen consecrated wine from the church, the implication being that they could only have a diabolical use for it.

The accusations caused great uproar locally. Rumours spread that hundreds of children had been delivered into the Devil's hand and that the evil genius himself had been seen going about the countryside. In May 1669 the royal government (King Charles XI was then aged 13) instructed the bishop to appoint worthy ministers to join members of the royal council in a commission to restore peace and order, without the use of imprisonment or torture. In June the bishop was told to order public prayers throughout his diocese to ward off the Devil's wrath, and this may perhaps have made the panic worse, for when the commission met, on 13 August, 3000 people came flocking to hear its deliberations.

After an investigation lasting till 25 August, the commission found that 300 children had been involved, and identified 70 witches. Far from being treated mildly, 23 who freely admitted their guilt were promptly beheaded and their bodies then burned to ashes. The other 47 were sent to the town of Falun, where they were later executed in the same way. In addition, 15 of the children were executed, 36 aged between nine and 15 were made to run the gauntlet and condemned to be publicly beaten on the hands with rods every Sunday for a year, and 20 more, aged under nine, were to be beaten on the hands on three successive Sundays.



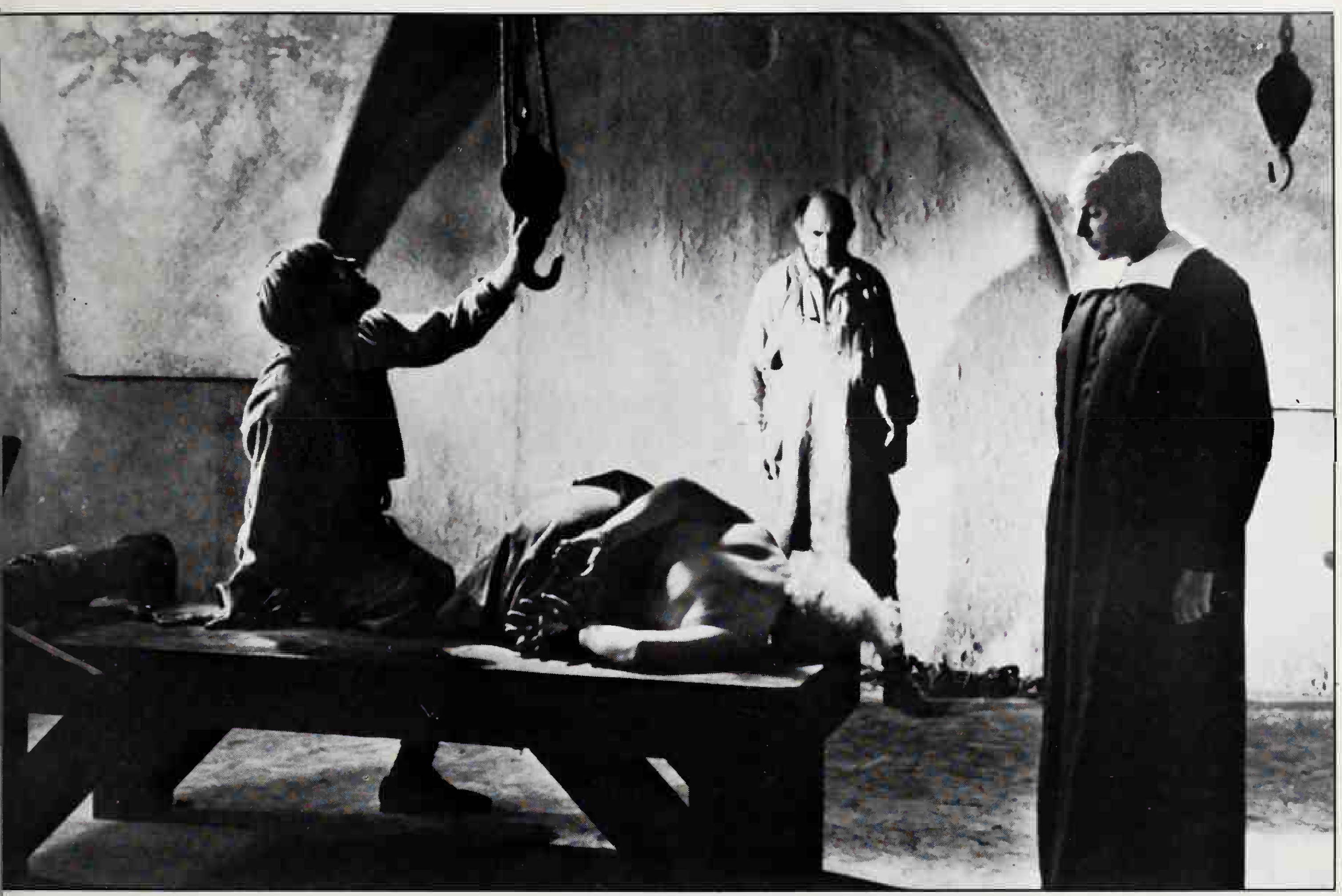
Man in Gray

The atmosphere of dream or fantasy so often found in the confessions of accused witches hangs thickly round the Mora case. According to the evidence given to the commission, the children were dressed in red or blue clothes and carried by the witches to the Blocula, riding on goats or sticks or cooking spits or on the bodies of men who were fast asleep. The Blocula itself sounds like a place from a dream. It was 'situated in a delicate large meadow, whereof you can see no end'. There was a gate, painted in various colours, and behind it a smaller meadow and a house. The beasts the witches rode were left in the smaller meadow and the bodies of the sleeping men were propped up against the wall of the house. Inside, in one huge room there was a very long table at which the witches sat down to feast, and near it was another room, 'in which there were very lovely and delicate beds'.

Every witch had to take a child with her, such was the Devil's dubious fondness for young souls, and he bullied them and whipped them if they did not. Some of them took as many as 15 or 16 children with them. The children were made to deny God. They were baptized anew by the Devil's priests and their names were written in blood in the Devil's book.

The Devil appeared as a man. He had a red beard and he usually dressed in a gray coat, a high-crowned hat with linen of various colours wrapped round it, and stockings of red and blue with long garters. When they sat down to eat, those who stood highest in the Devil's favour were placed nearest him. The children stood by the door and the Devil himself gave them their food and drink.

Afterwards the witches danced, careering round and round astraddle on halberds (weapons which were a combination of a



National Film Archive

he Scandinavian countries were relatively free f organized witch-hunting, but fear of witches xisted and could arouse panic and hysteria *eft* Detail from a contemporary illustration of itches in Sweden in 1669: they were accused f stealing children for the Devil *Above* A uspect about to be tortured, a still from the anish film *Day of Wrath*

pear and a battle axe), while the Devil oared with laughter and played the harp ith fingers which were like claws. The ancing culminated in a mixture of fightng and copulation. The Devil had children s a result of sexual intercourse with the itches, but they bore toads and snakes hrough their intercourse with each other.

The witches also said that they used to neet at a gravel pit which was near a rossroads, and there they would cover heir heads with garments and dance. On he beasts or instruments which the Devil rovided they would be carried over churches nd high walls. He gave them ointment hich they smeared on themselves, and a addle to ride on. He would give a witch a urse in which were shavings filed off a lock. It had a stone tied to it, and the witch ould drop it into water, saying, 'As these havings of the clock do never return to the lock from which they are taken, so may ny soul never return to heaven.'

The panic spread beyond Elfdale. In 1670 ommissions of investigation were appointd in the Uppsala area and in Helsinki, n the Swedish province of Finland. In 674 and 1675 a royal commission inquired into allegations of witchcraft in the parishes of Thorsaker, Ytterlannas and Dahl, and there was another holocaust.

In 1676 there were investigations in Stockholm and six women were executed. Many more were imprisoned, and many of them insisted that they were guilty. A Finnish woman named Magdalen Mattsdotter was accused by several children and servant girls, and her own two daughters said they had seen the Devil standing beside her. She denied the accusations and was burned alive, her younger daughter walking all the way to the stake with her trying to persuade her to confess. Later it became clear that the servants had accused her out of envy and malice, and they were condemned to death in their turn. The case contributed to a revulsion of feeling, Charles XI banned all further accusations, and the hysteria died away.

Christian Thomasius, a German lawyer and author of *De Crimine Magiae* (1701), who was head of Halle University (which his opponents nicknamed Hell University), said that he met one of the Swedish officials appointed to investigate accusations. The official told him that he and the other lay judges easily saw through the evidence, which was based on the lies and fantasies of children. But the Lutheran ministers, who dominated the proceedings, were convinced that the Holy Spirit spoke through the children and would never allow them to tell lies in such a case, citing the text 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings' (Psalm 8, Matthew 21.16). After many innocent people had been put to death, one boy accused a man everyone respected. One of the commissioners offered the boy money to admit that he had made a mistake and had really meant to accuse somebody else. This the boy readily did, and the ministers on the commission decided that the Holy Spirit did not speak through the children after all. They gave the boy a beating and abandoned the inquiry.

Fighting in Germany during the Thirty Years War, Swedish generals had put a stop to witch trials in areas under their control, on the orders of Queen Christina, who believed that persecuting supposed witches simply entangled increasing numbers of people in 'an inextricable labyrinth', a conclusion which all the European evidence bears out. H. R. Trevor-Roper has commented (in *The European Witch-Craze in the 16th and 17th Centuries*) that the subsequent persecutions in Sweden itself followed on the new intolerance of the Swedish Lutheran Church in the 1660s. 'Like the established Calvinist Church in Scotland, it had shaken itself free from other, more liberal Protestant parties, and its Puritan leaders prepared to advertise their purity by a great witch-hunt.'

FURTHER READING: H. C. Lea, *Materials Towards a History of Witchcraft* (Yoseloff, 1957 reprint, 3 vols); M. A. Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (Clarendon Press, 1967 reprint); R. H. Robbins, *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (Spring Books, 1959).

SWORD

Regarded with mystical reverence in the Dark Ages, the sword was credited with a personality and power of its own; in dances of immensely ancient lineage it replaced the sticks and clubs of victory celebrations and seasonal fertility rites

UNLIKE SPEARS AND AXES, which can be traced back to the Stone Age, the sword never existed in primitive times, for it presupposes a certain skill in metallurgy, and a certain sophistication in war; also, a social class willing to support the craftsman and learn the best use of his handiwork. For these reasons, the sword has a mystique which cruder weapons lack.

According to an Arabian tradition, swords were invented by the Hebrews, and first made on a hill near Damascus where Cain slew his brother Abel. Archeology, however, favours a European origin. The oldest known specimens are Bronze Age products dating from the second millennium BC, and found in Crete and north-western Europe. The sword appears to have developed originally as an enlargement of the knife or dagger, and repeated sharpening produced tapering blades that came to a point. When these were found to be deadly, smiths hit on the idea of a greatly elongated dagger with a sharp end.

The earliest swords of all were primarily for thrusting rather than slashing. Engraved gems from Mycenae portray warriors running their opponents through; an Irish sword from Lissane resembles a rapier. And although slashing with the sharp edge must have developed early, it was not until the 18th century that any swordsmen explicitly fenced with the point alone. However, the amount of practice required for this modern art suggests that the early thrusting swords must have demanded considerable skill. They imply a warrior elite with the time and inclination to undergo training.

It is not surprising, therefore, that legends of superhuman armourers lay stress on their sword-making. A letter written in 520 AD by Cassiodorus, secretary to the Gothic king Theodoric, thanks another monarch for a gift of swords 'so beautiful that one is tempted to attribute them to Vulcan': for this late classical writer, Vulcan's fame for such weapons is a literary cliché. The Teutonic peoples had their counterpart for Vulcan in Volund or Wieland, who made Siegfried's sword, Balmung. In England, Wieland became Wayland the Smith (see SMITH) and had a forge in a cave near Lambourn, Berkshire. Testing Balmung on a rival, Amilias, he cleft him down to the thighs so adroitly that Amilias only realized he had been struck when he tried to walk and fell apart.

The sword with which Beowulf, the Anglo-Saxon epic hero (see BEOWULF), kills the mother of the monster Grendel, whom he had mortally wounded, is the work of giants, not men. According to Geoffrey of Monmouth, King Arthur's sword Caliburn (an early form of the better-known name Excalibur; see ARTHUR) was forged in the enchanted island of Avalon. Several other fabulous swords are the gifts of fairy folk.

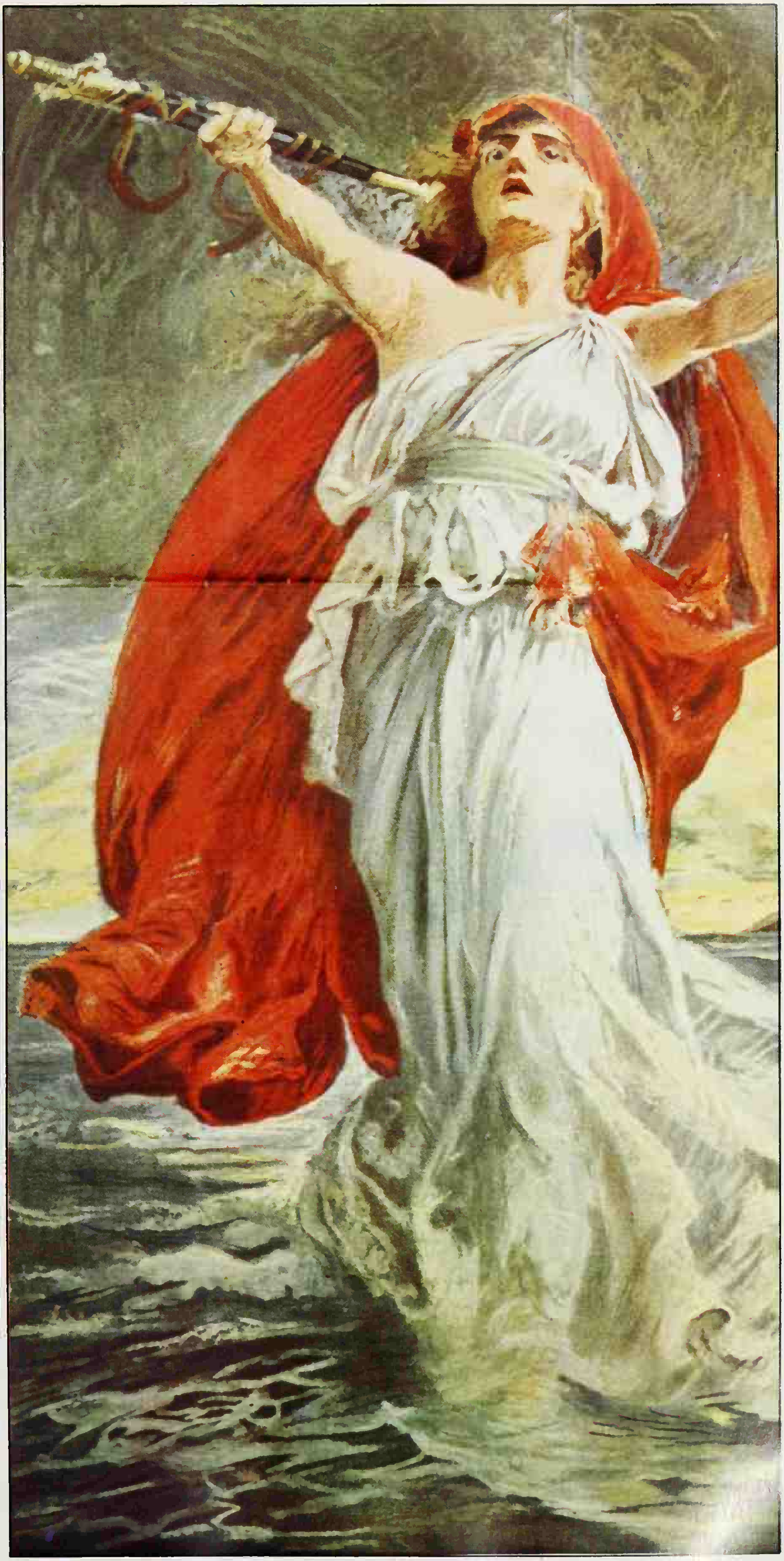
While classical legend acknowledges divine armourer, its interest in sword is not nearly as pronounced as that show later by the barbarian and Christia worlds. However, the two most famou classical stories do reflect the weapon' association with royal status and power.

It is said that when Alexander invade Asia Minor, he visited a temple of Zeu where a cart was tied up with a complicate knot of bark, known as the 'Gordian Knot' Gordius, the father of Midas and king o Phrygia, had gained the throne in obedienc to an oracle when he arrived riding in th cart, which he dedicated to Zeus. A prophec declared that whoever could undo the kno would become ruler of Asia. Alexande wasted no time; drawing his sword, he cu the Knot, and became ruler of Asia.

The second legend, preserved by Cicer has given rise to another proverbial phras Damocles, a sycophant of the Sicilia tyrant Dionysius, wishing to flatter him remarked how happy a man in such a positio must be. Dionysius invited him to a banque and offered him the royal chair. Damocle sat down on it, and suddenly realized that sword was suspended above his head by single horsehair. From this he could draw moral about the insecurity of greatness.

On the whole, the Greeks and Roman did not regard their weapons with mystica reverence. The precursors of the roman ticized swords of medieval chivalry ar Teutonic and Celtic, not classical. Iro swords of the *La Tène* Celtic culture, in th last centuries BC, have almost parallel edge

n pagan legends of northern Europe a great ero frequently has a magic sword, possessed f wonderful powers and a life of its own, and he swords of Viking chieftains bore such ames as Odin's Flame, Battle Snake or Sea-ing's Fire. In the Middle Ages the mystique f the sword was adapted to a new symbolism, ncluding the concept of Church and State as he 'Two Swords' *Left* The English Great word of State, symbolizing royal power and uthority *Right* The Sword of Justice, in a ritish propaganda poster of the First World War



nd rounded points, foreshadowing the nassive two-handed swords of the knights. According to Livy and other sources, the words of 'barbarian' Europe were always ssociated with social rank; common men eldom possessed them. Their special aura s pagan long before it is Christian. Tacitus, vriting of a German tribe, notes a reverence or weapons: 'no business, public or private, s transacted except in arms'.

A Life of Its Own

Numerous swords have been found in the eat bogs of Denmark, which were originally neres. They were laid under the water with are, sometimes deliberately bent, in fenced-ff areas. This northern practice belongs to he early centuries of the Christian era. It nay have been partly sacrificial, but it may lso have been akin to the custom of burying words with the noblemen who owned them. The idea was not simply that the dead man night need his weapon in the hereafter; the word symbolized his power, and was linked vith him personally. It shared his life and had life of its own. Hence, anyone else would be ash to take it. It might injure him or fail him n battle, or the owner's ghost might return o claim it. So even when the corpse of the wner lay elsewhere, it might be advisable o put his sword out of others' reach at the ottom of a mere, for instance, under magical rotection. The implied personality of the word itself is a frequent motif in northern nythology. Those recovered from chieftains' graves of the period 400–700 AD show a fineness of workmanship, a richness of

Although many sword dances are now showpieces, it is thought that they originated as rituals honouring and promoting virility, victory and fertility. The swords may be used more as props than as weapons, but dances in which a combat is danced out are believed to be descended from mock battles between individual groups representing summer and winter, fertility and sterility *Below* Sword dancing at the Braemar Games *Bottom* The North Skelton Long Sword Dance, from the English Midlands *Right* Turkish dancers in mimic combat *Far Right* A Javanese fighting dancer

Picturepoint, London

Spectrum Colour Library

ornament, which accord with many literary indications that a sword was more than a utilitarian object. It was a living being with a name and a character. If not buried with its lord, it might be handed on in his family.

When Beowulf prepares for his combat with Grendel's mother, the royal herald Unferth lends him a weapon:

> Not the least or the worst of his war equipment
> Was the sword the herald of Hrothgar loaned
> In his hour of need, Hrunting its name,
> An ancient heirloom, trusty and tried;
> Its blade was of iron, with etched design
> Tempered in blood of many a battle.
> Never in fight had it failed the hand
> That drew it, daring the perils of war.

Many of the swords in other folklore and legend have outright supernatural properties. They shine, and discharge lightning-bolts. They grow and shrink at need, they make the owner invisible, they give him the power to travel fast over long distances, and they run with blood when he dies. Heroes pierce rocks with them, splinter arrows in flight, and create hills and springs by striking the earth.

Numerous tales of magic further reveal the personality of the weapon, and its independent wisdom and virtue. There are swords that can cause death whenever drawn, or throw enemies into an enchanted sleep. Some, on the other hand, can release the spellbound, keep the dying alive, and even resuscitate the dead. Swords act by themselves, striking out of the air in forests, or falling on an enemy. They speak to save their masters from danger, and understand when spoken to themselves.

Reserved for a Special Task

A number of stories tell of a sword's gift of discrimination. Some are unwilling to deal a wrongful blow. When the owner of one tries to attack a friend, it becomes too heavy for him to lift. Others turn to wood when somebody raises them against an innocent victim.

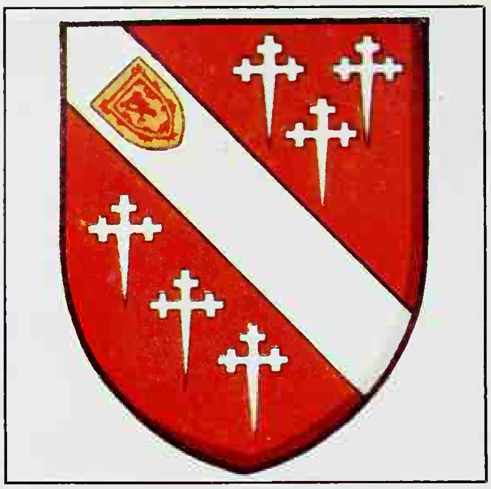
The use of these marvellous weapons is governed by many rules and hazards. Some can only be moved at all by the right person. Some are reserved for a single appointed task (as when a son must take up his father's sword to kill his father's murderer).

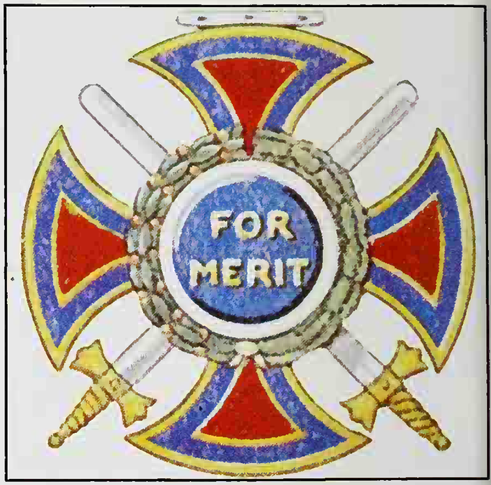
Sonia Halliday

Some must be handled in a special manner, for example, they must be drawn, and sheathed, and drawn again a fixed number of times before the battle.

A hero's vulnerability may be bound up with the magical qualities of his weapon. He may wear an impenetrable garment which his own sword alone can pierce, and eventually does. His sword may be bewitched so that it will break in one particular peril, or fail in one crucial crisis. However potent the sword's virtue, a hostile magic can be stronger. It can be dulled or otherwise neutralized, perhaps by an incantation, or by scratching a counter-charm on the blade. A magic wand may break it, or an evil spirit get into it. Grendel's mother is a case in point. She is a troll woman living in a cave under a

Picturepoint, London





Picturepoint, London

The warrior's sword is a common motif in heraldry and on military medals *Above (left)* Nazi war insignia awarded for 75 military engagements, *(centre)* the arms of the Howard family, *(right)* badge of the Order of Merit, military division *Right* Richard, Earl of Warwick is dubbed Knight of the Garter: the method of conferring knighthood by striking the candidate on the shoulder with a sword is still used

lake. Beowulf assails her with the sword Hrunting, but finds it useless against the demon:

> He swung his war sword with all his strength,
> Withheld not the blow, and the savage blade
> Rang on her head its hymn of hate.
> But the bold one found that the battle-flasher
> Would bite no longer, nor harm her life. . . .
> That time was the first for the treasured blade
> That its glory failed in the press of the fray.

On the wall, however, Beowulf spies an ancient sword made by giants. He manages to seize it, kills the troll woman, and cuts off the head of Grendel, whose corpse is still lying in the cave. The monster's blood melts the iron, so Beowulf can take only the hilt back with him. When he returns the ineffectual Hrunting to Unferth, despite its almost disastrous failure, 'the great-hearted hero spoke no word in blame of the blade'. Hrunting deserves a human courtesy for doing its best.

The swords of the Vikings have many descriptive phrases and nicknames applied to them: Odin's Flame, Battle-Snake, Battle-Fire, Sea-King's Fire, Tongue of the Scabbard, Ice of Battle, Dog of the Helmet, Mail-Coat's Terror. Several sagas refer to Skofnung, 'the best of all swords which have been carried in northern lands'. Made for Hrolf Kraki, a 6th century king, it uttered a cry when it saw wounds. Skofnung was buried with its master, but 200 years later a warrior named Skeggi opened the grave and appropriated the sword.

Such an action was fraught with danger, though Skeggi himself knew the weapon's secrets and could handle it. Skofnung must never be drawn in the presence of a woman, or casually, with no immediate intention of fighting. Nor must the sun shine full on its pommel, which was protected by a cover. It had a 'life stone' as an accessory and wounds inflicted by the sword could be healed only by rubbing with the stone (archeology supplies evidence for these magical stones, which were large beads attached to the hilt by a thong). Skeggi reluctantly lent Skofnung to a young friend, Kormak, who had challenged a rival to a duel. Handing it over, Skeggi gave him all the necessary warnings and added that when the time came to fight, Kormak should breathe on the blade and a little snake would creep out under the guard. Scornful of all this cryptic advice, Kormak made every possible blunder. When he got home he tried to draw the sword to show to his mother (a double error) and it stuck in the scabbard, making a weird noise when he pulled harder. On reaching the duelling ground, he removed the cover so that the sun shone on the pommel. The snake appeared, but 'it was not handled as it should have been, and the luck of the sword was changed'. Again archeology sheds light: the snake would have been a faintly etched design, a charm of some sort, which showed up when the blade was breathed on.

In the medieval romances of Charlemagne and his peers, a similarly respectful spirit is evident. The Emperor's sword is Joyeuse, and that of his champion Roland is called Durandal. Joyeuse, 'the unconquered' was made by the smith Gallas and took him three years to finish. The gold-hilted coronation sword of the kings of France, now in the Louvre, is traditionally described as the sword of Charlemagne. Apart from a new grip fitted by Napoleon, it does appear to be 9th century work, though its identity as Joyeuse cannot be proved. A second sword in Vienna, said to have' been given to Charlemagne by Haroun al-Raschid, the Caliph of Baghdad whose adventures are recounted in the *Arabian Nights*, is probably Hungarian.

The kinship of the Charlemagne cycle to the masculine world of Skeggi and Beowulf is reflected in an allusion to the sword Durandal, in the *Song of Roland*. When Roland is dying and recalls the things dearest to him, he is sad that Durandal will be masterless, but he does not think of Aude, his betrothed. In the more cultured romances of King Arthur (later as literature, though referring to an earlier period historically), women can, and usually do, put swords in the shade. Yet it is Arthur's sword, rather than Charlemagne's or Roland's, which has become immortal: doubtless because the advance in sophistication was also an advance in magical fantasy.

Arthur becomes king after passing the test of pulling a sword out of a stone, which no other claimant had succeeded in doing. In some versions, but not in all, this is said to have been the famous Excalibur which he wields later. Arthur's sword in the *Mabinogion* is called Caledvwlch, a Celtic name of uncertain derivation. In Geoffrey of Monmouth it becomes Caliburn. The form 'Excalibur' is supposed to be based on the Latin phrase *ex calce liberare*, 'to liberate from the stone'.

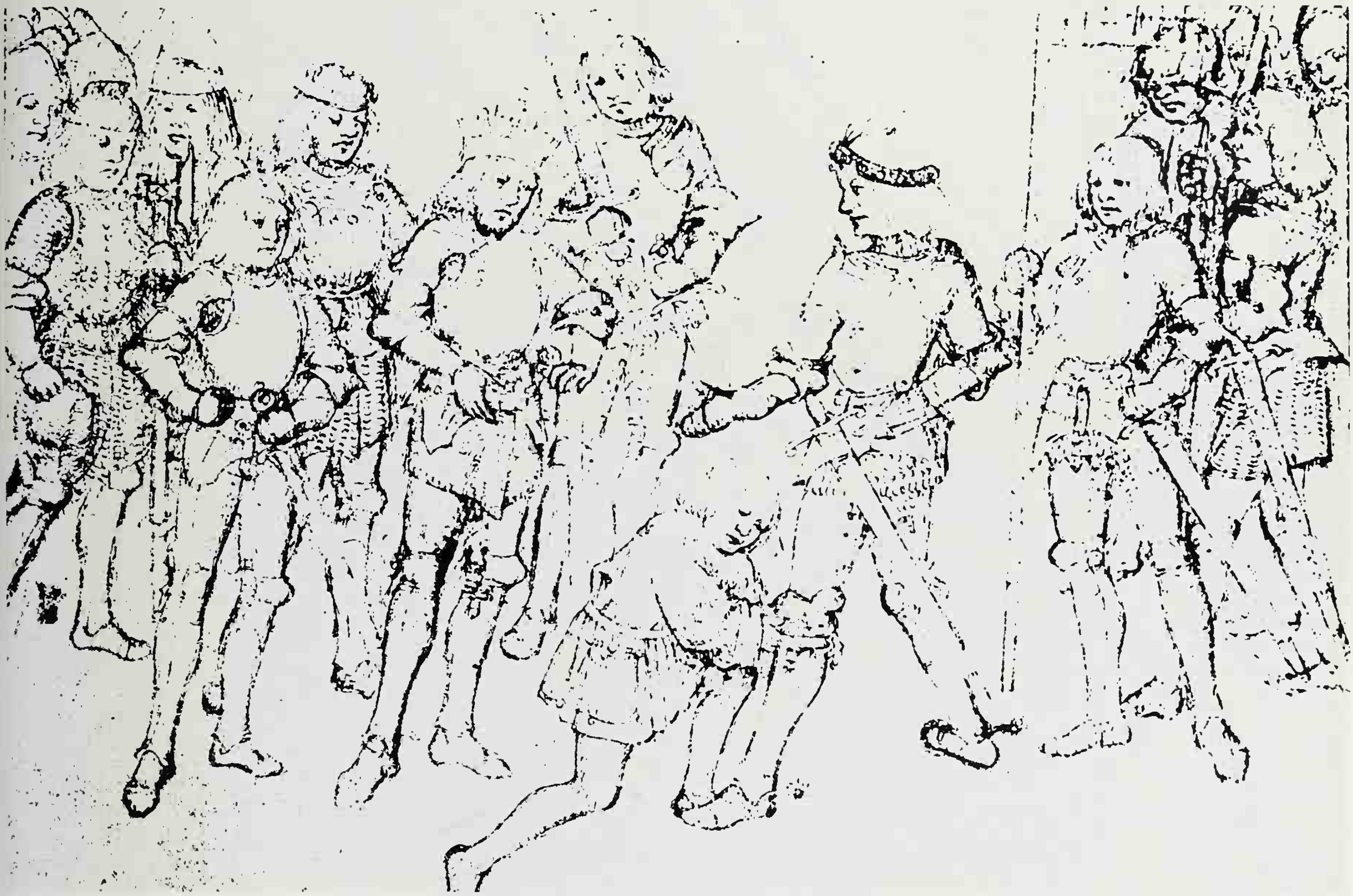
In Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, Excalibur is distinguished from the sword in the stone, and a different story is told of how Arthur came by it. Here Merlin brings Arthur to a lake, and he sees 'an arm clothed in white samite' rising above the surface with a sword in its hand, richly jewelled, in a fine scabbard. The Lady of the Lake approaches. In return for Arthur's promise of a boon to be specified later, she agrees to let him have the sword. He rows out and takes it, and the hand vanishes under the water. Merlin tells him to prize the scabbard also, for while he wears it, no wound can ever cause him to lose blood. Many years afterwards, Excalibur has to be thrown back into the water. The hand rises to catch it.

One suggestion to account for this story is that there may have been a tradition of sinking the weapons of dead chiefs in meres, as practised in Denmark. The Lady of the Lake was perhaps a priestess in charge of the sacred place, who allowed a particular sword to be recovered in order to endow a new chief with an old one's authority.

Twin-Edged Blade

Medieval legends name many other wonderful swords belonging to British, French, Scandinavian, German and Spanish heroes. The mystique did not die with the triumph of the Church, but it was Christianized. During the 12th century the sword was adapted to a new symbolism; it looked like a cross, it was wielded by crusaders against the infidel, and the twin edges of its blade could stand for truth and loyalty. Medieval political theory symbolized the spiritual and secular powers as the 'Two Swords', and the

'Receive this sword in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and use it in thine own defence and that of the Church of God . . .'



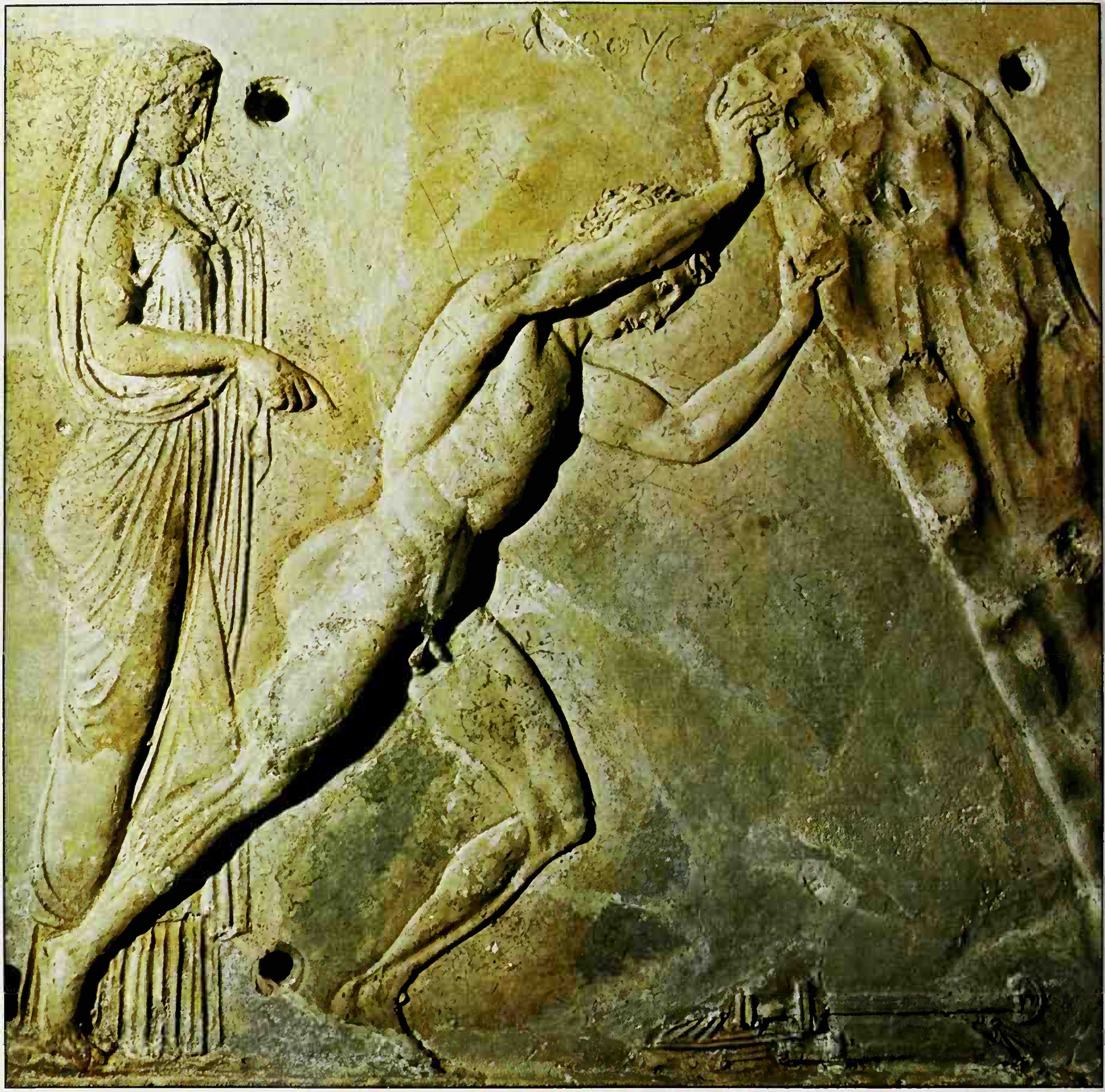
more ambitious popes claimed the right to carry both. The figure of Justice on the Old Bailey bears the secular sword.

In Germany, there are accounts of swords being introduced into marriage ceremonies. Sometimes the bridegroom held out the ring lying on the blade. One ritual required the bride to place her thumb on the pommel. A poem tells how an unwilling girl clenched her fist so tightly that the marriage could not proceed. The weapon's function in pledges and oaths of other types was by this time already ancient. When Hamlet says 'Swear by my sword', he is following a custom traceable a long way back to pagan Teutons.

Swords played an important part in the rituals of knighthood. Here too there were pagan antecedents. In *Beowulf* the king of the Geats honours the hero by giving him a rich sword. A Norwegian law manual describes the ceremony when a new member of the royal bodyguard, the Hearthmen, took the oath of allegiance. The king rested his own coronation sword, sheathed, on his right knee, with the hilt pointing forward with his hand covering it. The new Hearthman knelt before him, placed his own right hand under the hilt, and kissed the hand of the king.

In Christendom, when a knight went to church to be admitted into an order of chivalry, he handed his sword to the priest, who laid it on the altar, blessed it, and gave it back, saying: 'Receive this sword in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and use it in thine own defence and that of the Church of God, and for the confusion of enemies of the cross of Christ and the Christian faith.' The knight brandished it three times, sheathed it, and passed it to his sponsor. In the East too, the Samurai of Japan made the sword an object of reverence and ritual.

The lore of symbolism and magic gives the sword a variety of roles according to context. Viewed structurally, as a union of blade and guard, it stands for conjunction; functionally, as an instrument with the power to wound, it stands for liberty and strength; sexually, it is ambiguous. The straight Western type of sword is male, the curved oriental type is female. Despite the relationship with the scabbard, it is often



emblematic of chastity, because of its brightness and also its power to separate. Many characters in legend, for example, Siegfried, sleep beside a woman who must not be touched, with a sword between them.

For alchemists the sword is a symbol of purifying fire. In the magician's hands, it is a protection against malevolent ghosts and hostile enchantments. Its polished surface can be used like a crystal ball for 'scrying'. It figures in Arthurian legend as one of the four Hallows or sacred objects seen by Grail seekers: the sword, the cup, the dish and the lance. Occultists assert a connection between these Hallows and the four suits of the Tarot pack, in which swords correspond to the spades in the ordinary pack.

GEOFFREY ASHE

Sword Dances

In sword dancing the swords are used as props and not necessarily as weapons; dancers wield swords to build up elaborate group figures or for use in dance tricks. There are many variations and types of sword dances, but they share some characteristics: for instance, they are exclusively performed by men, they are highly stylized even when they portray combat, and they derive from cultic and perhaps mythological sources.

Although many sword dances are now showpieces, they probably all originated in pre-Christian rituals in honour of virility, victory and fertility. For instance, the *Moriscas* ('Moorish dances', in which a ritualistic form of battle is mimed) and the various types of sword-or-stick dances have intrigued scholars over a long period. These dances have now been traced, not to Moorish origin, but to very ancient springtime seasonal rites for the return of the sun and of vegetation, culminating in a human or animal sacrifice. The combat signified the battle between summer and winter, night and day; and the leaps and high kicks promoted growth. In the Iron Age, the sticks and clubs were replaced by metal swords, especially in mining areas, and the symbolic developments became increasingly complex.

Whatever the aboriginal motivation, the overt meaning of the Morisca type of sword dance changed during the Crusades and the Moorish invasion of Spain. In the

The Sword of Arthur

'And there I saw mage Merlin, whose vast wit
And hundred winters are but as the hands
Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

And near him stood the Lady of the Lake,
Who knows a subtler magic than his own –
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful.
She gave the king his huge cross-hilted sword,
Whereby to drive the heathen out: a mist
Of incense curl'd about her, and her face
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster gloom;
But there was heard among the holy hymns
A voice as of the waters, for she dwells
Down in a deep; calm, whatsoever storms
May shake the world, and when the surface rolls,
Hath power to walk the waters like our Lord.

There likewise I beheld Excalibur
Before him at his crowning borne, the sword
That rose from out the bosom of the lake,
And Arthur row'd across and took it – rich
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
Bewildering heart and eye – the blade so bright
That men are blinded by it – on one side,
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,
'Take me,' but turn the blade and ye shall see,
And written in the speech ye speak yourself,
'Cast me away!' And sad was Arthur's face
Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,
'Take thou and strike! The time to cast away
Is yet far off.' So this great brand the king
Took, and by this will beat his foemen down.

Tennyson *Idylls of the King*

view of the anthropologist George Foster, the trail of Iberian Moriscas spread from north to south along with the gradual expulsion of the Moors, from Lérida in 1150 to Andalusia in the 14th century. A further two centuries later, the Moriscas were taken by the Spanish to the New World.

Meanwhile, in the Middle Ages the sword dances of central Europe became attached to guilds as well as to male fraternities, and in Austria this is still the case. In Austria and in Spain and Portugal, the sword dances are traditional, while in England they were revived after 1900, thanks to the efforts of Cecil Sharp, the famous collector of folk song and dance; today they are losing their ceremonial meanings, even in the villages. In America they are kept alive by the enthusiasm of folk dance societies.

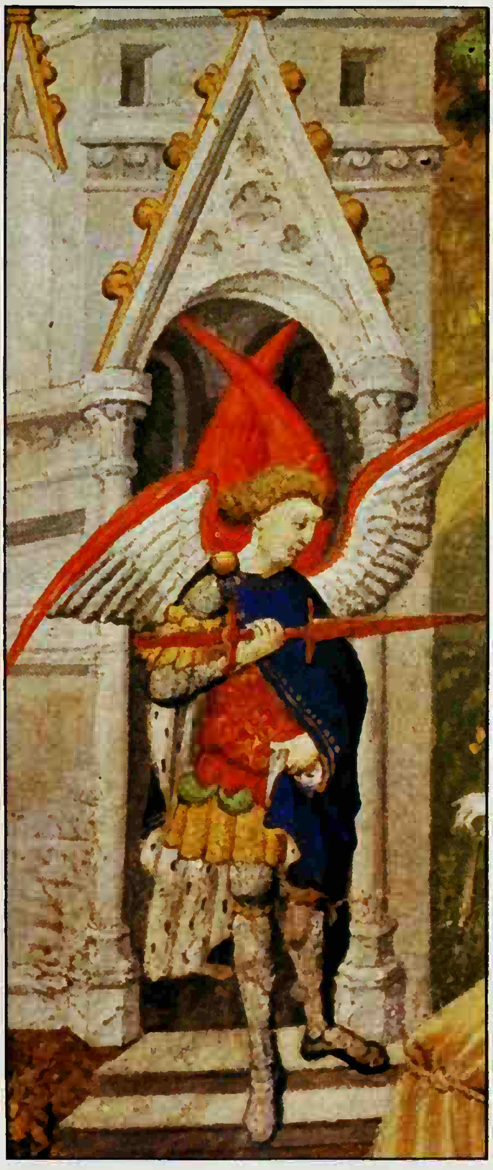
Despite the widespread diffusion of sword dances within the Old World and to the New, the celebrations have retained some of the original costuming and music, and a great deal of the aboriginal and medieval seasonal timing. They are held during the season of new life, from Epiphany to Corpus Christi. Moriscas abound during carnival time at Corpus Christi, sword dances on Plough Monday (first Monday after Twelfth Night) and during Whitsuntide or at May Day. Some dances are performed at unusual times, such as the September guild observance of the Hallein dancers from Austria, who also observe Whit Sunday.

Crossed and Wielded Weapons

Scholars have divided sword dances into various groupings. Solo dances which feature the brandishing of a sword or sabre predominate in the Near East. The Arab *Aissoua* is performed in a semi-trance culminating in self-mutilation. The Ukrainian *Zaporotchez* and the *Lezginka* of the Lezgis, Georgians, and Tartars in the Caucasus Mountains appear as a display of virtuosity, but probably originated in an old fertility rite, or at least a courtship rite for the display of masculine prowess. Before his female partner, the vigorous male leaps and whirls while he flourishes a sabre.

Stepping between two crossed swords or a sword and scabbard, or perhaps two crossed sticks, or pipes, originated as a victory dance. The best-known examples, all from Europe, are the Scottish *Gillie Callum*, the English *Bacca Pipes*, the Finnish *Skin Kompasse*, the Catalan *L'Hereu Riera*, and the Hungarian *Kanász Tánc*. Gillie Callum is now as popular among Scots in America as it is in Scotland, and women and children have been admitted as performers. The soloist follows a set routine to the traditional bagpipe music. With an elegant, erect carriage, and with extended arms and hands held to form a semi-circle, he lightly steps among the four spaces between the crossed sword and scabbard, excecuting a series of *jétes*, *pas de basques*, and other steps familiar to ballet dancers.

Left **The Greek hero Theseus raises a stone to take his father's sword: Roman terracotta relief, 2nd century AD. In the Arthurian legends, Arthur becomes king by drawing a magic sword from a stone, which in some versions is identified with his great sword Excalibur**
Below **In alchemy the sword was a symbol of purifying fire; and when God drove Adam from the garden of Eden he placed an angel at the gate with 'a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life': detail from the Bedford Book of Hours**



British Museum

Combat mime by a pair of opponents or two opposing factions involves the use of metal or wooden weapons. Among primitive tribes the weapon is usually a spear, a long staff or a war club, as in the Bontoc and Igorot war dances of the Philippines. More advanced civilizations have used metal in the construction of swords. In China and Japan swords feature in stylized, theatrical presentations of warrior dances. In Europe (except for Scandinavia), Latin America and the Caribbean, swords of metal or wood serve as weapons in the Moriscas. Closely connected to these are the Dalmatian *Moreshka*, a battle mime between two factions involving elaborate formations, and the Portuguese *Mouriscada* featuring the combat between beautifully-dressed men and demonic masked dancers. In Spain and Mexico *Los Moros y Cristianos*, the Moors and the Christians, is a drama of combat, ending with the victory of the Christians. The obvious reference to the Crusades has been reinterpreted by scholars such as Cecil Sharp and Curt Sachs as a medieval version of an ancient, pagan vegetation rite, a battle between the seasons, with the inevitable victory of the good, warm season. The drama usually includes dialogue, always elaborate costuming and masking, sometimes even realistic additions such as horses. If the Christian group has a leader called Santiago (St James, patron saint of Christendom), it is termed *Santiagos*. The English Morris Dance, despite the similarity of its name, differs from the south European Moriscas in the extreme stylization, the absence of actual conflict or the clash between sticks in set patterns, and the presence of side actors portraying a death and resurrection theme (see MORRIS DANCES).

When Spanish missionaries taught

Moriscas to their converts in Latin America, they apparently received a warm welcome. And they were able to substitute these vegetation combat dramas for the indigenous Indian dramas. Today, in Mexico, most religious fiestas include Los Moros y Cristianos under various names. The male dance-actors have substituted medieval costumes and masks for their aboriginal outfits; they clash with swords, usually of wood, instead of the aboriginal war clubs; the words spoken in Spanish or their native tongue are about the victory of Christianity. But they dance in a way that is earthly, relaxed, and retentive of ancient native styles.

Such importations have taken root in other areas colonized by the Spanish: the Philippines, Trinidad, Peru, Bolivia. In Brazil they have mingled with Negroid styles, as in the Mocambique of Sao Paolo, for the agrarian saint, San Benito. Here, the swords have become sticks and the battle features complex, syncopated rhythms and African steps. In the course of the fray, the swords are not only weapons, they are also used as percussion instruments. In time with the musical accompaniment usually of flute and drum, metal swords clang rhythmically and wooden swords clash with a duller sound. In some areas, such as Papantla in eastern Mexico, excitement is intensified by the dancers' high-pitched, monotone yells, and by the stamping of feet. These martial sounds synchronize with the visual effects of encounter, retreat, and advance.

Geometric Patterns

Sword dances of western Europe lack the element of combat; they create excitement by the steady evolutions of geometric patterns and metric beat of drum and stepping. In this dance, swords are not weapons. They connect the male dancers, usually six, sometimes ten or more. In her book *Sword Dance and Drama* (1962) Violet Alford describes the link:

> It begins by each man grasping his hilt in his right hand and in his left taking the point of his neighbour's sword. A closed chain or ring is thus formed, a sword between each man and the next, and except for the weaving of broadswords at fixed moments into a pentagon, hexagon, or octagon according to the number of swords and dancers, it never comes undone until each figure is finished.

In this book Miss Alford points to the frequency of sword dances in mining regions, perhaps as magical cults of sword forgers. She supports this discovery by giving lists of mining sites, in which she includes, however, some sites that are salt mines, such as the one near Hallein, Austria. Some scholars, like the folklorist Douglas Kennedy, regard sword dances as vestiges of seasonal rites. Kennedy supports this theory by describing two aspects of death and resurrection, the symbolic killing of a captain or the Fool in an associated acting group, and the revival by a doctor (see FOLKPLAYS).

In Kennedy's book *England's Dances* he also suggests a further theory, of influenc from invading Norsemen. British swor dances are indeed concentrated in norther England, with long-sword dances in Danis Mercia (covering the present-day Midlands and Rapper Sword Dances in Northumbri (much of northern England). They ar further north than the Morris dances, and i distinct areas.

Elsewhere in Europe, hilt-and-poir sword dances abound in the mountainou regions of northern Spain and the Basqu provinces, and in the mountainous area of Austria. Everywhere the dances shar basic formations and types of costume an music, although regional differences ar often evident.

The dances usually progress in a sur wise circle or weave within a circle, bu the Flamborough Sword Dance straighten out into longways formations. The characte of the figures depends on the length of th swords. A ring-and-step usually start the dance, that is, a circling with a stead run, shifting the sword from shoulder t shoulder; this section concludes with foo tapping, 'stepping' in place, and sometime with a clash, that is, a meeting of the sword in a central pyramid. Afterwards follo evolutions such as the 'single-under' an 'double-under', in which the dancers i succession twist under the upraised sword the 'single-over' and 'double-over', in whic they successively step over the lowere swords; the 'roll' or 'waves', in which th parallel swords are successively raised an lowered and the dancers pass under an

The basis of the sword's mystique is its fficiency as a killer combined with its use by warrior elite in advanced societies, skilled in netallurgy and comparatively sophisticated echniques of war *Left* Effigy of a crusader: the word looked like a cross, it was wielded by Christian knights against the infidel, and its two dges could stand for truth and loyalty *Right* The triumphant Ottoman leader Mehmed II at he death of Uzun Hasan, ruler of northern Mesopotamia

ver; the 'reel' or circular hey with raised words; and 'threedling' with double overhead arches. In the final, triumphant 'lock' he swords are linked into a star shape. Then the leader displays the star during tepping, or the group wraps the lock around he neck of an attendant character and ircles clockwise in the 'rose'. This leads to he decapitation and to the resurrection hat follows.

Among the many variations, the dance igures at Dürrnberg near Hallein are particularly ingenious. In addition to the basic ormations, they include symbolic presentaions of mining activities, along with hymed speeches by the sergeant. In the bridge' sequence the dancers stand in two parallel lines, with lowered swords. The ergeants step across and the files follow. For the shaft the dancers form a vault with heir raised swords; they conclude with a apid winding movement for the joyous eturn homeward.

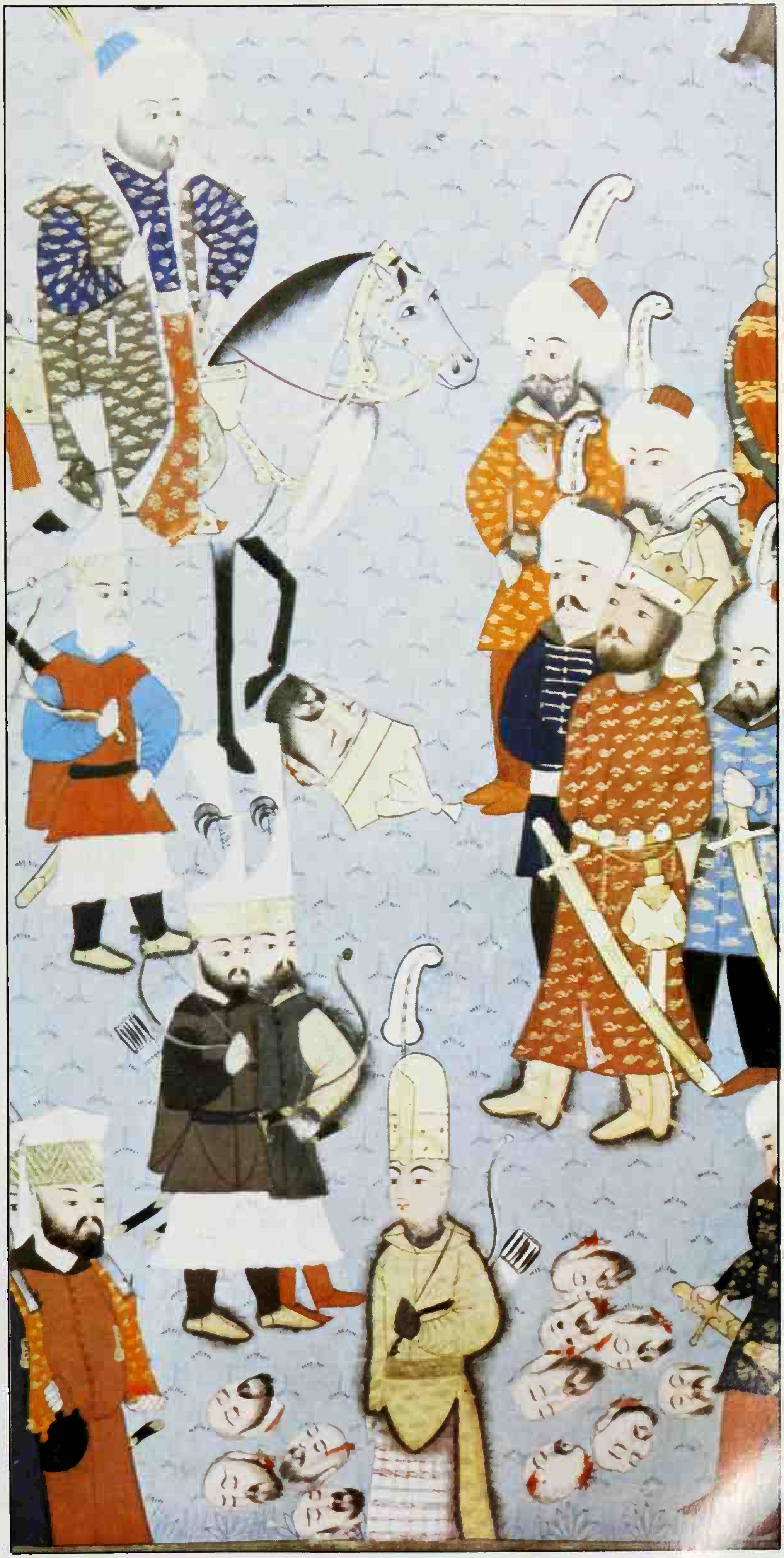
Richard Wolfram, who has published nany books and articles in German on the opic, considers these semi-realistic formaions recent inventions, superimposed on lder, basic patterns of sun-circling and interweaving. He agrees with Kennedy that he probable origin was an ancient vegetaion cult, long preceding the first historical eference of 1398. He associates the custom vith pre-Christian brotherhood initiations, ince he has observed that these dances are lways performed by members from within a losed fraternity group.

In every setting, from village green to gymnasium, the well-performed versions of these dances continue to enchant the performers and to captivate the audiences, not only due to the skill and beauty of the execution, but also thanks to a primordial nagic of intent and geometry.

(See also DANCE; FOOL).

GERTRUDE KURATH

FURTHER READING: For sword: H. R. Ellis Davidson, *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1962); R. E. Oakeshott, *The Archaeology of Weapons* (Lutterworth Press, 1960). For sword dances: Violet Alford, *Sword Dance and Drama* (Merlin Press, 1962); Violet Alford and Rodney Gallop, *The Traditional Dance* (Methuen, 1935); Douglas Kennedy, *England's Dances* (Bell, 1949).



Sonia Halliday

It is the role of religious symbols,' said . G. Jung, 'to give a meaning to the life of an': it is increasingly suggested in the West hat the lack of adequate symbols is part of he Western malaise

SYMBOLISM

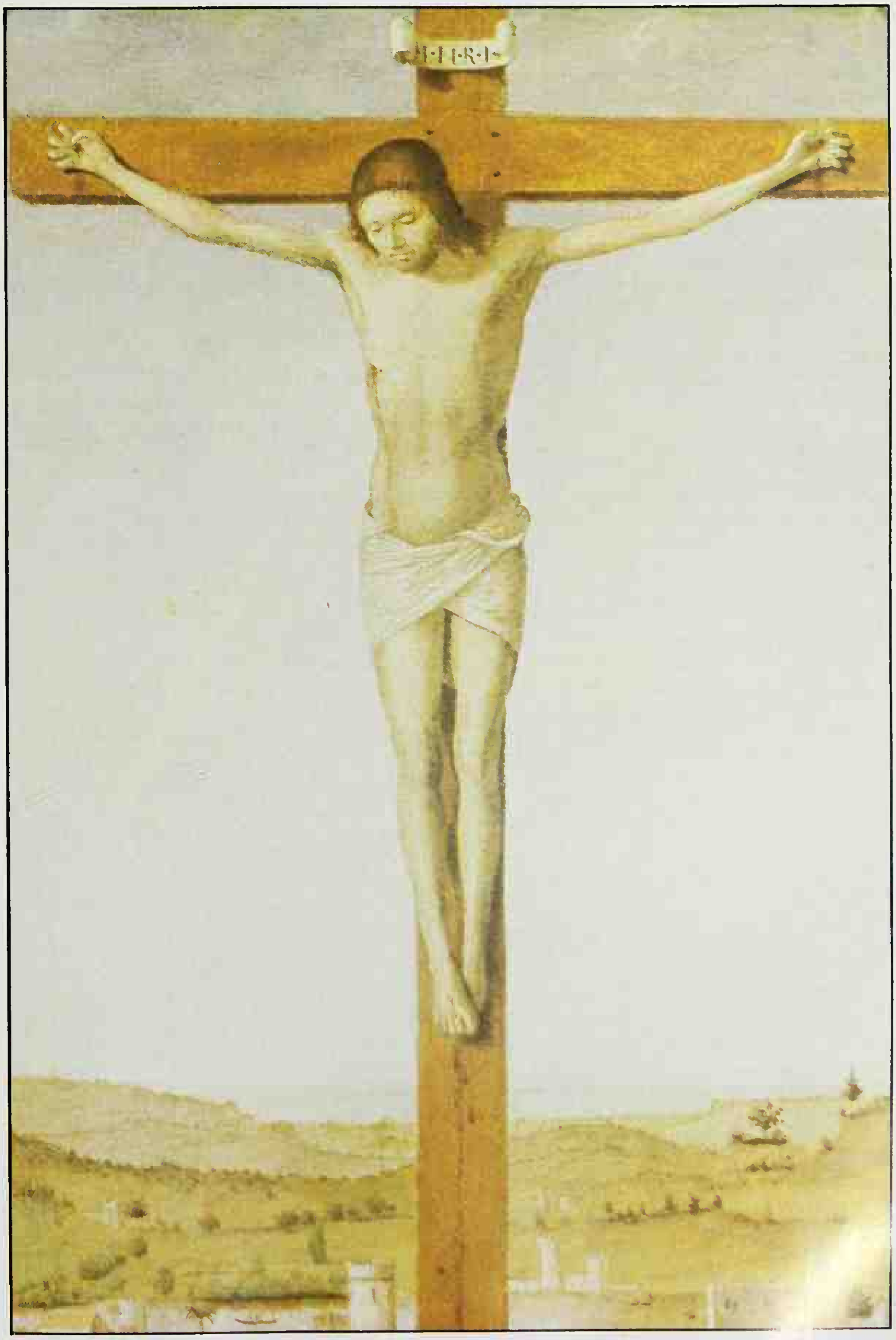
THE GREAT function of symbols,' wrote he distinguished German Protestant heologian Paul Tillich, 'is to point beyond hemselves, in the power of that to which hey point, to open up levels of reality which therwise are closed, and to open up levels f the human mind of which we otherwise re not aware.' There is no doubt that nan's tendency to see in everything around im intimations of a veiled reality, and to erform actions which are themselves ymbolic, has played an immensely imporant role in the history of religion and nagic, but the elucidation of symbols is a ighly precarious business. This is because symbol is essentially an attempt to express hat is otherwise inexpressible, which neans that it cannot be expounded satisctorily in words. The more powerful the ymbol, the more this is so. Having caught t in your butterfly net, you can only display t with its wings spread out and a neat lassificatory label underneath if you pop t in the killing bottle first. It is now unrtunately dead – it has lost the elusive uality which made you want to capture it n the first place.

Major religious symbols have about them tantalizing vagueness or, put the other ay round, a haunting richness, with an ir of holding the key to a secret beyond he grasp of rational intelligence. It is ecause they are felt 'to open up levels of eality which otherwise are closed' that ome Christian writers have suggested that God has chosen to disclose himself to nan, symbols would be the natural vehicles f his revelation. Whether this is accepted r not, it is at least impressive evidence f one of the cardinal facts about symbols (as istinct from minor conventional signs, ke trademarks or traffic lights), that the mpact they make on the mind is one of ecognition, not of invention. They are elt to be discovered, not devised.

What is discovered, however, may vary onsiderably from one mind to another. Even within the same broad tradition, a ymbol will have different connotations for ifferent people (and even for the same person t different times). A telling example is rovided by Mary Douglas in her book *Natural Symbols*, in connection with the Roman Catholic rule of abstaining from meat on Fridays. This was originally a symbol of 'personal mortification, a small weekly celebration of the annual celebration of Good Friday. Thus it pointed directly to Calvary and Redemption.' Among sophisticated Catholics the rule is increasingly ignored and its symbolism regarded as empty. But the rule is strictly maintained by many Irish immigrants to England, in a country where they have no roots and often no relatives or friends. To them, abstaining from meat on Fridays is a vital symbol of 'allegiance to a humble home in Ireland and to a glorious tradition in Rome.'

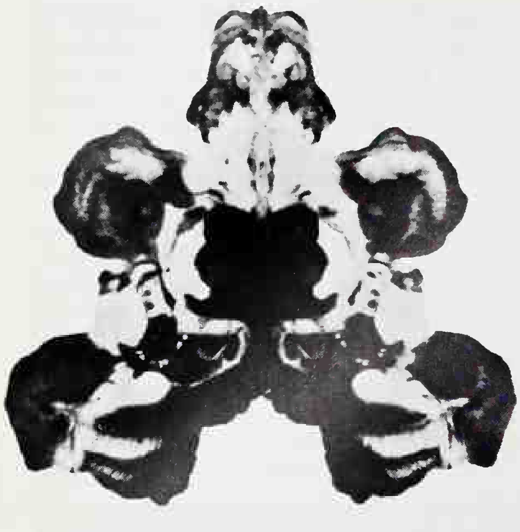
Another factor which makes the interpretation of symbols difficult is the confusing variety of ways in which the symbolic is related to the real. A symbol, by definition, is not what it represents. It stands for, suggests, reveals to the mind a reality other than itself. But in practice the symbol is frequently treated as if it *is* what it represents. When someone insults the American flag in the United States, for example, the violence of the reaction provoked among some patriots suggests that what has been maltreated is not merely a piece of cloth but America itself. Both the culprit and the patriot know perfectly well that the flag is not the same as America, but represents it, but they also feel that in a more profound sense it is America that has been damaged, not just the piece of cloth.

This principle applies to much religious



National Gallery/John Freeman

eft Greek figure of the god Dionysus as a outh, holding a cock and an egg, symbols of reator and created, youth and age, death and ebirth *Right* At the simplest level, the cross nerely represents the instrument of Christ's leath, but it has a great wealth of symbolic eferences, leading the mind on to the idea of acrifice and suffering, resurrection, a burden o be borne, trust in God's will, reconciliation etween God and man, reconciliation of pposites, the essential unity of all things: *rucifixion*, by Antonello da Messina



Practically everything of which human beings have become aware has been used as a symbol, but the same symbol will have different connotations for different people: the Rorschach test, devised by a Swiss psychiatrist, follows the principle of the child's inkblot game and takes the shapes, scenes and characters which you see in the blots as clues to your personality

and magical symbolism. When a sorcerer inflicts injuries on a puppet which represents his victim, he believes that he is inflicting the same injuries on the real body of the victim, and all imitative magic depends on the belief that the symbol of a thing *is* the thing (see IMITATIVE MAGIC).

Christ and the Host

The host, or communion wafer, is a symbol of Christ but when it has been properly consecrated in the Mass, it also *is* Christ. The Pope's Encyclical letter *Mysterium Fidei*, issued in 1965, observes that it is wrong 'to be so preoccupied with considering the nature of the sacramental sign that the impression is created that the symbolism – and no one denies its existence in the most holy Eucharist – expresses and exhausts the whole meaning of Christ's presence in this sacrament. Nor is it right to treat of the mystery of transubstantiation without mentioning the marvellous change of the whole of the bread's substance into Christ's body . . . Nor, finally, is it right to put forward and to give expression in practice to the view which maintains that Christ the Lord is no longer present in the consecrated hosts which are left over when the sacrifice of the Mass is over.'

On the other hand, there are many contexts in which the symbol is sharply distinguished from the reality, which it merely stands for. And between the two extremes is a large 'in between' area, in which the symbol is felt to be intimately connected with the reality without fully being it. Magical systems of correspondences, for instance, create links of this sort between symbols and realities (see CORRESPONDENCES). The Hungarian students who, in the uprising of 1956, hanged a bust of the Stalinist politician Matyas Rakosi from a lamp post, probably felt that they were doing something more effective than making a mere gesture of defiance. Going back to the Eucharist for a moment, there is a whole range of responses from Christians of different denominations to the nature of Christ's presence in the sacrament, as being 'real' or 'spiritual' or 'merely symbolic' (see MASS; SACRAMENTS).

Practically everything of which human beings have become aware has been recognized somewhere by somebody as a symbol of something. Unusual events are treated as omens, signs of an underlying maladjustment of the order of Nature which will bring death or disaster. The rustling of trees, the fall of lots, the speech of a person in trance, the lines on a hand or the stars in the sky, are interpreted as symbols of the will of the gods or the pattern of fate (see DIVINATION; OMENS; ORACLES). Animals, plants, features of landscape, thunder and lightning, parts of the body, clothes, numbers, buildings and innumerable other objects are felt to have greater significance than appears on the surface. A rolling wheel may be a symbol of the sun or the course of the year, and the sun and the year themselves may be symbols of the divine. An early Christian writer, Hippolytus of Rome, said of Christ: 'He the Sun, once he had risen from the womb of the earth, showed the 12 Apostles to be as it were 12 hours . . . Once they were gathered together, the 12 Apostles like 12 months proclaimed the perfect year, Christ.'

In Green Pastures

People and their occupations may be symbols. Among the symbols associated with the pharaohs in Egypt were the herdsman and the shepherd. 'The functions of the state,' said Henri Frankfort (in *Before Philosophy*), 'were to own, control, drive, discipline, and defend; they were also to cherish, nurture, shelter, and enlarge the population. The god-sent controller of the Egyptian people was the herdsman who kept them in green pastures, fought to secure fresh pastures for them, drove off the voracious beasts who attacked them, belaboured the cattle who strayed out of line, and helped the weaklings.' He went on to point out that, 'The concept of the herdsman has its negative pole in the implication that men are simply cattle, property on a lower stage of existence.'

Similarly, the king could be thought of as a shepherd. The sun god had appointed him, 'to be shepherd of this land, to keep alive the people', watching by night and by day. One of the earliest emblems of Egyptian kings was the shepherd's crook. The imagery of the shepherd has also played an inspiring role in Judaism and Christianity. In the Old Testament God is a shepherd ('The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want' – Psalm 23) and, in the New, Jesus says: 'I am the good shepherd . . . and I lay down my life for the sheep' (John, chapter 10). Christ or the Church or the priest cares for the 'flock' of humanity, including its 'black sheep', and the crosier, or pastoral staff, of a bishop, may be descended from a shepherd's crook and is an emblem of firmness and mercy, and of the authority that combines both these qualities (see also GOOD SHEPHERD; SHEEP).

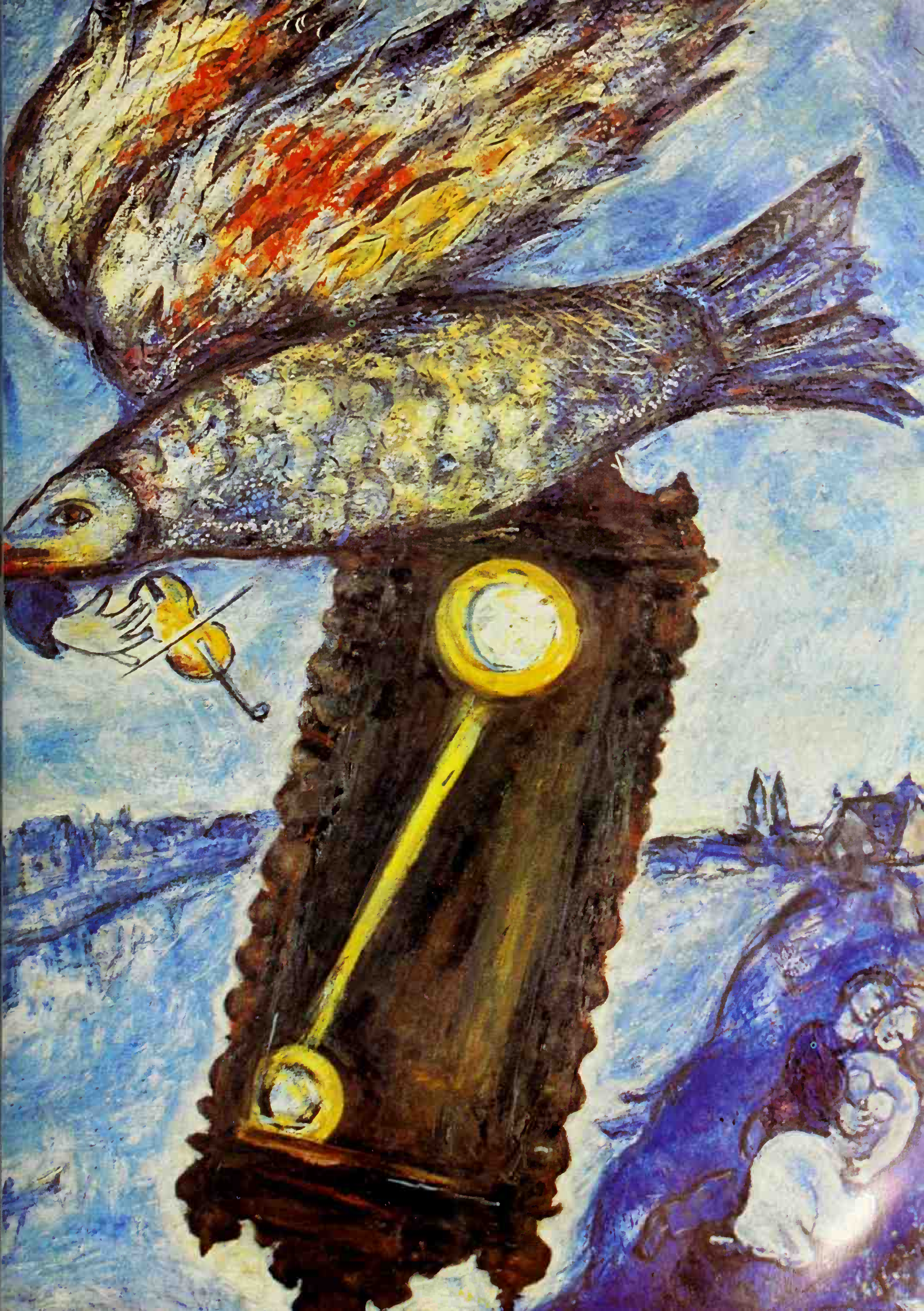
Evocative and long-lived myths are powerful symbols, stories which are felt to reveal otherwise inexpressible truths. Religious and magical rites and actions are symbols, ranging from an initiation ceremony in which the candidate symbolically dies and is reborn (see INITIATION) to such simple gestures as the kiss of peace, the finger held to the lips as a sign of silence, kneeling as a mark of humility, standing as a mark of respect, sitting as a mark of authority, in the case of a king or a judge (see also GESTURE). But even an apparently simple gesture may have unsuspected depths. In Islam, prostration is an expression of humility before God, but to the Sufi mystics it is something much more, meaning 'no less than extinction, a ritual affirmation that there is no room in the Divine Presence for more than the One' (see SUFIS).

The Key and the Net

Some symbols have a basic meaning which is obvious enough and depends on some evident resemblance or analogy, though many will see deeper significance below the surface. Inverted symbols, for example, things which are upside down, backwards, the wrong way round, are generally connected with evil, black magic and witchcraft because they reverse accepted standards of what is good. To turn a crucifix upside down, with deliberate intent, is to state allegiance to God's adversary, the Devil. A key opens a lock and so it stands for access to some spiritual truth or condition. In Christian art St Peter is shown with the keys of heaven as a sign of the authority and function which Jesus conferred on him (Matthew 16.19). More broadly, a key may be a symbol of the longing for God which opens the door of Christian hope. More broadly still, it may be a key of wisdom or eternal life, of initiation, of entrance into mysteries (see HOUSE). A net is an obvious image of entanglement, of difficulties and snares. It appears in the book of Ezekiel as a weapon in the hand of God, who will throw a net over an offender and entrap him. But also in Ezekiel, and in the New Testament, the net is connected with fishing, and in Christian symbolism it is linked with the apostles and their successors as fishers of men, the Pope is called the Fisherman.

Other symbols are not approached so simply (or deceptively simply). Receptacles are, in general, symbols of woman, for obvious reasons, but they are readily spiritualized: one of the emblems of the Virgin Mary, for instance, is a golden vase filled with white lilies (for purity). The cup is a female sex symbol but it also carries connotations of nourishment and abundance. When it becomes the cup of the Eucharist, and still more when it becomes

A dream-like painting by Chagall, *Time is a River without Banks*: both the Freudian and Jungian schools of psychoanalysis treat the scenes and images which appear in dreams as symbols which reveal unconscious mental processes, and Jungian methods of interpretation relate them to symbols in alchemy, myths, legends and folktales

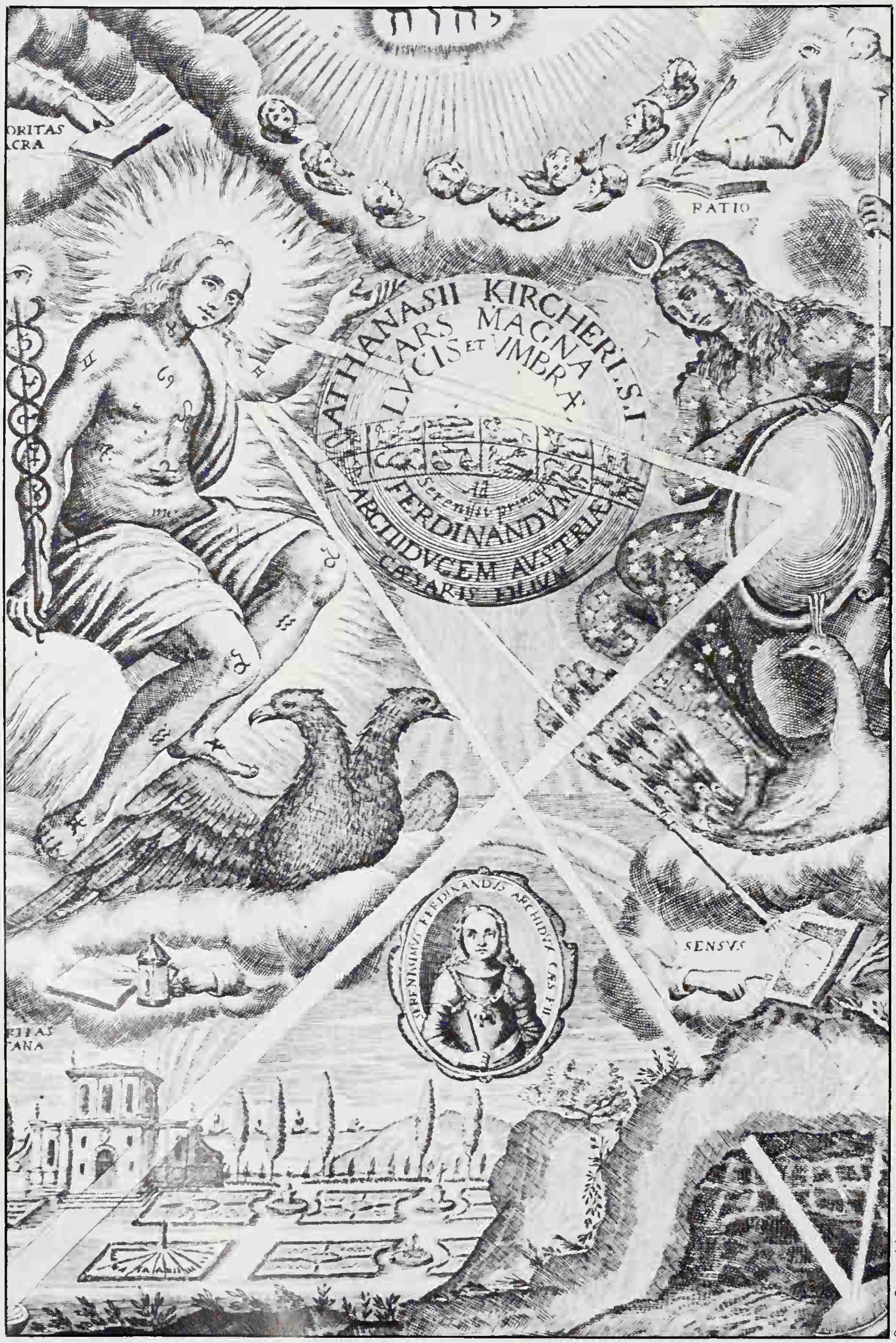


the Grail, it has clearly far transcended its simple anatomical reference (see GRAIL).

One of the functions of a symbol is to act as what has been called 'a rallying point for meaning'. Through it the mind connects together several meanings which are not outwardly or immediately connected. Mircea Eliade cites as an example the symbolism of the moon, which links together the moon's changing cycle in the sky, the rhythms and cycles of life on earth, woman, the waters, death and rebirth, and human destiny (see MOON). 'The symbol is capable of revealing a perspective in which diverse realities can be fitted together or even integrated into a system.' This is why symbols are used in meditation, in many traditions, to lead the mind on to the realization of unsuspected truths or aspects of truth.

The Christian cross, at the simplest level, merely represents the cross on which Jesus died, but it has a great wealth and variety of symbolic references. The mind which dwells on it may be led on to ideas, among others, of death, suffering, sacrifice, resurrection, of a crisis to be endured or a burden to be borne, of God's love, of trust in God's will, of the reconciliation of God and man, the reconciliation of opposites, the unity of all things (see CROSS).

The cross can lead on towards the symbolism of the centre. The directions of east, west, north and south have their own symbolism, as do left and right (see DIRECTIONS), and up and down are naturally connected with ideas of progress and decline, superiority and inferiority, good and evil, heaven in the sky and hell underground (see SKY; STEPS). The cross on which Christ died can be thought of as an emblem which connects the directions and the centre, and in Christian tradition it was erected at the centre of the world. The cross was also thought of as a tree, and in various myths a great tree is the *axis mundi*, 'axis of the world', its trunk connecting the underworld, the earth and the sky, and affording a means of communication between the different levels. The tree reconciles the opposites of sky and earth, 'above' and 'below', as Christ's death on the glory tree made it possible for men below to be reconciled with God above. (Or the tree may be an *imago mundi*, a diagram of the world, as it is in the Cabala – see CABALA; TREES.)



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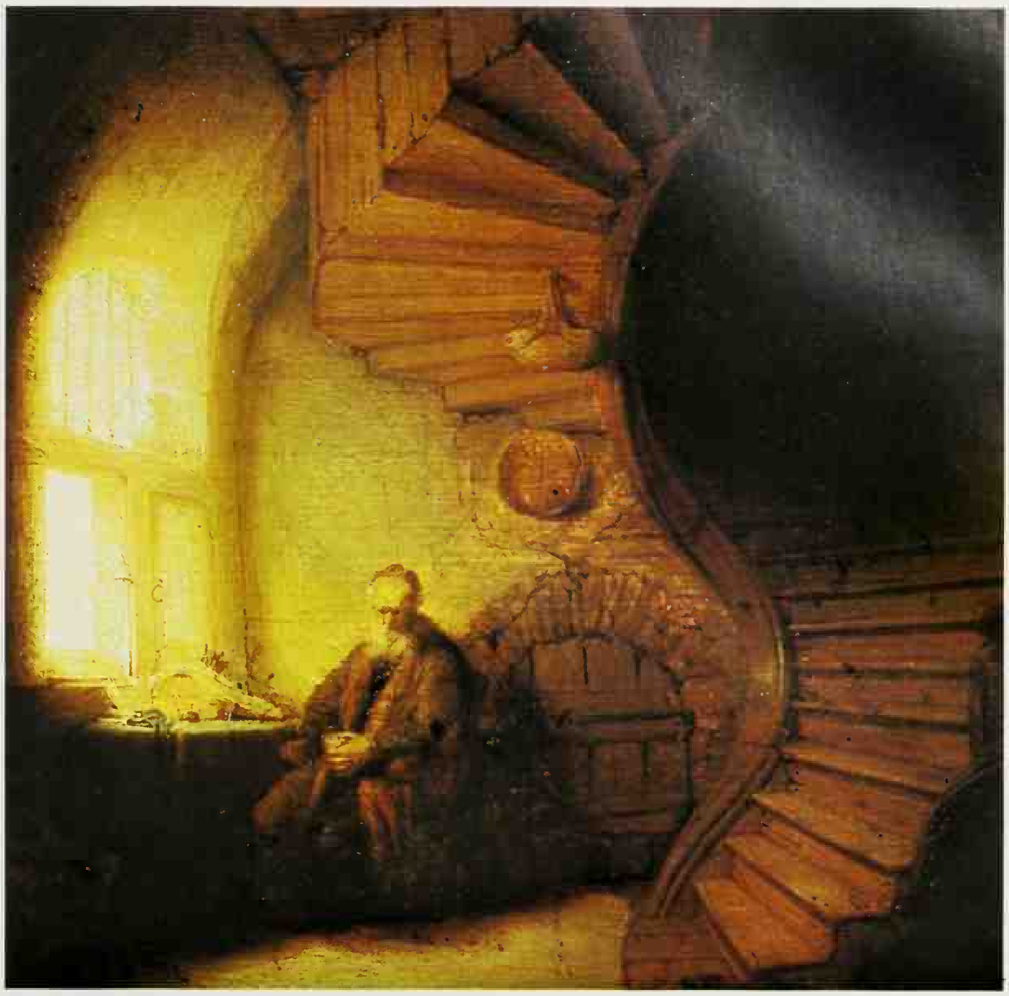
A sacred mountain is sometimes thought to stand at the centre of the world, its 'roots', so to speak, beneath the surface and its summit in the sky. The Hindu heavens are located in a 'divine enclosure', said to lie somewhere north of the Himalayas, at the centre of which, marking the centre of the universe, is Mt Meru, a towering peak of pure gold, round which the heavenly bodies revolve. Alternatively, a shrine or city may be said to stand at the navel or centre of the earth, and sites where the divine is believed to have revealed itself become sacred 'centres', places where communication is possible between different levels of existence, between men and the gods, or the living and the dead (see MOUNTAIN; NAVEL; PILGRIMAGE).

In myths, legends and folktales a temple, a palace, a castle, may be a centre in which is concealed a secret goal of overwhelming importance, a holy of holies, the Grail, the enchanted princess, the treasure hoard. A maze contains a hidden centre, the way to which is hard to find, but in reaching the heart of the labyrinth a man penetrates perhaps to the Heavenly Jerusalem, perhaps to the underworld, perhaps to the innermost recesses of his own being (see MAZE). It is interesting that a map of Christian's journey in *Pilgrim's Progress*, reproduced earlier (page 2147), shows his path as a spiral, circling in from the periphery to the Celestial City at the centre, suggesting a journey inwards.

The Hero Within

That symbols illuminate the world within us, whether or not they reveal the world without, is one of the answers to the view which regards a symbol as at best unimportant and at worst undesirable, because it stands in place of a reality instead of being the reality itself. In practice, as suggested above, important symbols are not treated as reality substitutes but as things closely connected with a reality which could not be approached without them. In many societies outside the West symbols and symbolic actions are essential ingredients of human understanding of, and relationships with, reality, including relationships with the human as well as the sacred (see, for instance, MENSTRUATION; RITES OF PASSAGE; RITUAL). In the West, it is



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increasingly suggested that a lack of adequate symbols is part of the modern malaise.

For example, in his last book, *Man and His Symbols*, C. G. Jung said: ‘It is the role of religious symbols to give a meaning to the life of man. The Pueblo Indians believe that they are the sons of Father Sun, and this belief endows their life with a perspective (and a goal) that goes far beyond their limited existence. It gives them ample space for the unfolding of personality and permits them a full life as complete persons. Their plight is infinitely more satisfactory than that of a man in our own civilization who knows that he is (and will remain) nothing more than an underdog with no inner meaning to his life . . .

‘Today, for instance, we talk of “matter”. We describe its physical properties. We conduct laboratory experiments to demonstrate some of its aspects. But the word “matter” remains a dry, inhuman, and purely intellectual concept, without any psychic significance for us. How different was the former image of matter – the Great Mother – that could encompass and express he profound emotional meaning of Mother Earth. In the same way, what was the spirit s now identified with intellect and thus ceases to be the Father of All. It has degenerated to the limited ego-thoughts of man; the immense emotional energy expressed in the image of “our Father” vanishes into the sand of an intellectual desert.’

Both the Freudian and Jungian schools of psychoanalysis maintain that the scenes and images which the mind throws up into consciousness, especially in dreams, may begin to make sense if treated, not at their ace value, but as symbols which reveal unconscious mental processes. Jungian methods of interpretation relate these scenes and images to symbols in alchemy and in myths, legend and folktales from all over he world. Common features in numerous hero legends, for instance, suggest that the myth of the hero is really about the process of psychologically growing up. ‘In the developing consciousness of the individual he hero figure is the symbol by which the emerging ego overcomes the inertia of the unconscious mind, and liberates the mature man from a regressive longing to return to he blissful state of infancy in a world dominated by his mother’ (this and following quotes are from Joseph L. Henderson’s essay in *Man and His Symbols*).

The ‘tutelary’ figure often found presiding over the upbringing and education of the hero (the centaur Chiron who taught Achilles, for example, or Merlin in the case of Arthur) becomes on this view a symbolic representation of the ‘whole psyche, the larger and more comprehensive identity that supplies the strength that the personal ego lacks’, and his role in the story suggests that ‘the essential function of the heroic myth is the development of the individual’s ego-consciousness – in a manner that will equip him for the arduous tasks with which life confronts him.’

When the hero does battle with dragons, monsters and evil beings, he is really in combat with his own ‘regressive’ trends, with the dark and negative side of his personality, with the shadow in himself. When he rescues a beautiful girl from danger – the damsel in distress theme – he is really liberating his own ‘anima’, the female component in his being (a woman’s male component is the ‘animus’). The hero eventually falls, betrayed or sacrificed, because ‘the human ego can be exalted to experience godlike attributes, but only at the cost of over-reaching itself and falling to disaster’ (a theme which many who are not Jungians have seen in the story of Adam and Eve, or in the Faust legend, and which flourishes in science fiction).

The hero myth, on this interpretation, is concerned with individuation, the process of becoming a ‘whole person’, which has parallels in the processes of alchemy and magic, where the attempt is made to find the true inner self and expand it, as it were, into the whole man, who is the divine man (see ALCHEMY; MAGIC).

The Jungian approach has been criticised on various grounds, among them that it involves talking about ‘the’ hero myth, when in fact there are many hero myths, which have to be stretched or lopped on a bed of Procrustes to fit them into the desired pattern, and similarly with other types of myth; and that it equally blurs the different meanings which people recognize in the same myth or symbol. The archetypes, or symbolic figures and patterns which the Jungians identify, do not appear as regularly as Jungians maintain; and when they do, they may be more easily explained as images drawn from the ordinary conscious experience of humanity than as images from the unconscious.

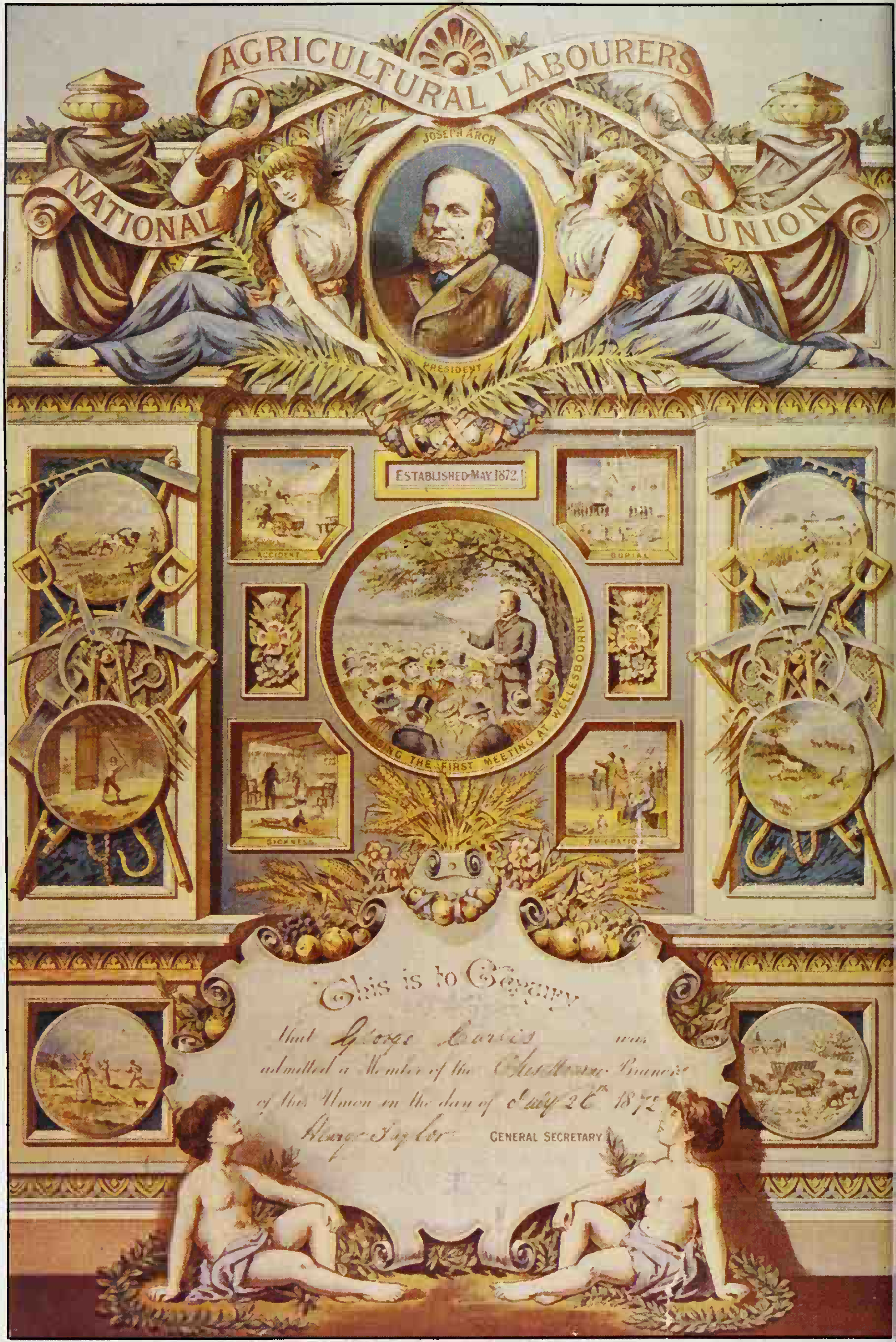
The Collective Unconscious

Jung explained the appearance of the same themes over and over again by locating them in the ‘collective unconscious’, but it was difficult to explain how this reservoir of images, if it exists, is transmitted from one generation to the next. In *Man and His Symbols* Jung suggested that the human mind has a tendency to form symbolic representations of a motif, ‘representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern’, and that this tendency is ‘an instinctive *trend*, as marked as the impulse of birds to build nests . . .’

Common themes and symbols in different societies can no doubt often be explained as the result of common human tendencies and common human experience, but

Left **Jung believed that alchemical symbolism expressed ageless realities of the human mind and that the alchemists were exploring their own innermost depths: symbols of alchemy and science mingled on the title page of Athanasius Kircher’s *Ars Magna Lucis et Umbrae*, 1671**
Above right **Rembrandt’s *Philosopher with an Open Book* suggests the light of illumination penetrating the darkness of ignorance, and the spiral stairs recall the alchemical motif of a return to the womb as a penetration of the recesses of the self**

The dignity of work, strength in unity, rejection of war and desire for peace – these concepts are symbolized in a Victorian trade union membership certificate


NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS UNION
JOSEPH ARCH
PRESIDENT
ESTABLISHED MAY 1872
ACCIDENT
BURIAL
SICKNESS
EMIGRATION
ADDRESSING THE FIRST MEETING AT WELLESBOURNE

This is to Certify
that George Curtis was
admitted a Member of the Chesterton Branch
of this Union on the day of July 26th 1872
Henry Taylor GENERAL SECRETARY

symbols can also be seen migrating from one culture and religion to another. Obvious examples are Old Testament symbols which were adopted and adapted by the early Christians. In the Old Testament God is the Father, as he remained in Christianity, and he is king, judge and shepherd, which all became symbolic roles of Christ. He is also the cultivator of vines, which are his people ('My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill' – Isaiah, chapter 5). Ignatius of Antioch, expanding on the theme in the 2nd century, said: 'Christ the tree of life . . . has the Apostles for branches, the redeemed for fruit, words for leaves; baptism is the root, and the Father, the gardener.' In St John's gospel again, Jesus is 'the bread of life' (chapter 6), referring back to the manna on which the Israelites fed in the wilderness, and this symbolism became linked with the host in the Mass.

The Christians saw figures and events in the Old Testament as 'types', or symbolic foreshadowings, of Christian figures and events. Jonah emerging from the belly of the whale, for example, was a type of Christ's resurrection from the dead (see JONAH). And, in one of the supreme examples, Christ was identified with the 'suffering servant' of Isaiah (chapter 53): 'He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief . . . upon him was the chastisement that made us whole and with his stripes we are healed.'

(See also numerous other articles, including ALPHABET; BODY; BURIAL; CIRCLE; COLOURS; DREAMS; ICONOGRAPHY; LANDSCAPE SYMBOLISM; MANDALA; PHALLIC SYMBOLISM).

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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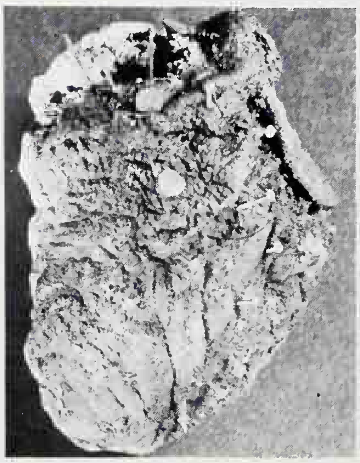
Sympathetic Magic

Term coined by Sir James Frazer, in *The Golden Bough* for the principle that 'things act on each other at a distance through a secret sympathy'; combining two basic assumptions of magical thinking, the principle of mimicry, 'that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause', and the law of contact, 'that things which have once been in contact with each other contrive to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed.'

See IMITATIVE MAGIC.



Syncretism

The mingling in one religious system of elements drawn from different systems: for example, the blending of cults in the Roman Empire as Eastern religions spread to the West and gods of different regions were identified with each other; or the blending of Egyptian, Greek, Christian and other elements in Gnosticism; or the mingling of eastern and western ideas in some modern occult systems.

All of us experience startling coincidences in our lives. Are they just that – coincidences, meaningless and chance occurrences – or does an underlying principle lie concealed behind outwardly unconnected events?

SYNCHRONICITY

ON THE MORNING of April Fool's Day in 1949, C.G. Jung (see JUNG) made a note about an inscription which contained a figure that was half-man and half-fish. There was fish for lunch and someone mentioned the custom of making an 'April fish' (in French, *poisson d'avril*) of a victim. In the afternoon he was unexpectedly shown some pictures of fish by a former patient and in the evening he saw a piece of embroidery with fishes and sea monsters in it. Next morning, a patient told him how she had dreamed the previous night of a large fish, which swam across a lake to her and landed at her feet. That was all for the moment, but later he had occasion to write about this series of coincidences. After finishing writing, he strolled over to a nearby lake – and what should he find lying on the bank but a fish a foot long?

'When coincidences pile up in this way,' Jung wrote in an essay 'On Synchronicity' which he published in 1951, 'one cannot help being impressed by them – for the greater the number of terms in such a series, or the more unusual its character, the more improbable it becomes.' He took it that the curious accumulation of fishes had occurred by chance, but all the same it seemed distinctly improbable.

A Dream Comes True

Another experience of a similar kind which impressed him occurred when a woman patient was telling him about a dream in which she was given an expensive piece of jewellery – a golden scarab. While she was talking, Jung heard a tapping at the window behind him. He looked round and found that a flying insect was bumping against the glass. It flew into the room when he opened the window and he caught it. It was a scarabaeid beetle, of a golden-green colour. He handed it to his patient and said, 'Here is your scarab.'

Jung also cited the splendid story of a Monsieur Deschamps who, as a boy in Orléans, was given a piece of plum pudding – a rarity in France – by a Monsieur de Fortgibu. It made an impression on him and ten years later, in a Paris restaurant, he saw a plum pudding and asked for a piece, but it turned out that the pudding had been specially made for Monsieur de Fortgibu. Many years after this Deschamps was with friends for the evening and was given a piece of plum pudding. Delightedly eating it, he remarked that the only thing missing was Monsieur de Fortgibu. At that moment the door opened and in walked an elderly, sadly disorientated gentleman. It was Monsieur de Fortgibu, who turned out to have muddled the address and come to the wrong house.

Jung coined the term 'synchronicity' for what he suggested might be an 'a-causal connecting principle' behind the occurrence of two or more events which are apparently linked together in some signficant way, but are not connected by cause and effect.

When you are thinking of someone you know and the telephone rings, and on the other end of the line is the person you were thinking about, you do not expect to discover any causal relationship between the two events. When a clock stops at the moment when someone in the house dies – an occurrence quite frequently reported (see SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES) – it does not appear that the death causes the clock to stop (or that the clock causes the death, for that matter), and yet it is natural to feel that the two events are linked.

The Cosmic Kaleidoscope

Although it was Jung who coined the word synchronicity itself, he had been preceded in the field by the Austrian biologist Paul Kammerer, a tragic figure who committed suicide in 1926, aged 45. Kammerer suspected that there might be more to coincidences than met the eye and he noted down significant examples for many years.

Most of them were trivial in themselves. For instance, he noted that one day in 1910 his brother-in-law went to a concert where his seat number was 9 and his cloakroom ticket was also No 9, and at another concert the following day he sat in seat No 21 and his cloakroom ticket was No 21.

Kammerer spent hours in parks and in trams carefully noting down the particulars of passers-by or passengers – by sex, age, type of costume and whether they carried objects like parcels or umbrellas. Analysing these phenomena, he found that they tended to cluster in groups, in the same way that gamblers enjoy runs of good luck, or that we all sometimes experience one of those times when for no apparent reason everything goes right (or the reverse). He concluded that 'the recurrence of identical or similar data in contiguous areas of space or time is a simple empirical fact which has to be accepted and which cannot be explained by coincidence – or rather, which makes coincidence rule to such an extent that the concept of coincidence itself is negated.'

Kammerer published his findings in his book *Das Gesetz der Serie* in 1919. He believed that non-physical, non-causal factors must be at work and put forward the idea of a force which causes similar events to occur – like the person's death and the clock stopping. He suggested the image of 'a world mosaic or cosmic kaleidoscope which, in spite of constant shufflings and rearrangements, also takes care of bringing like and like together.' This principle of like being connected with like, incidentally, is an extremely old one in magic (see IMITATIVE MAGIC).

A Fourth Principle

Jung used Kammerer's work in his essay on 'Synchronicity: an Acausal Connecting Principle', which he issued from his institute in Zurich in 1952. It is included in the eighth volume of the English edition of his *Collected Works*. Like so much that he wrote, it is not at all easy to follow. Science, he said, had become obsessed with the need to explain everything in terms of cause and effect, and was consequently closing its eyes to the possibility of non-causal explanations. 'The synchronistic factor merely stipulates the existence of an intellectually necessary principle which could be added as a fourth to the recognized triad of space, time and causality.'

Jung was further encouraged to look for such a non-causal factor by the great physicist and Nobel prize-winner Wolfgang Pauli, for in the study of sub-atomic theoretical physics the occurrence of meaningful non-causal events had already been recognized. 'The causality principle,' Jung wrote, 'asserts that the connnection between cause and effect is a necessary one. The synchronicity principle asserts that the terms of a meaningful coincidence are connected by simultaneity and meaning.'

He went on to link this new principle with the unconscious mind and to track it to a lair in the collective unconscious – the unconscious which all human beings share in Jungian theory. Here lie the archetypal figures and symbols created by the common experiences of the human race (see COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS). The archetypes sometimes invade the conscious mind and somehow give rise to synchronicity in action – for example, the coincidence of the flying beetle with the patient describing her dream of the golden scarab. How this works, however, is far from clear. Even Arthur Koestler, whose book *The Roots of Coincidence* is the best treatment of the subject, was unable fully to elucidate Jung's meaning.

ESP and Astrology

Jung wanted to explain clairvoyance and telepathy in terms of synchronicity rather than extrasensory perception. The success of J.B. Rhine's card-guessing experiments, the *I Ching* and astrology were all grist to this mill. Jung studied a collection of 180 horoscopes of married couples and came to the conclusion that there were positive correlations between the astrological interpretations and the lives of the subjects, too strong to be put down to chance. He could not explain this in terms of cause and effect, and he suggested that his 'a-causal connecting principle' was responsible.

Koestler pointed out that, before the scientific revolution of the 17th century, the idea of hidden links and affinities between outwardly unconnected phenomena was part of Western Europe's acccepted way of explaining the world. All things were connected together by unseen 'correspondences' (see CORRESPONDENCES) and 'sympathies' in a vast, connected whole in which nothing occurred by coincidence. Kammerer's cosmic kaleidoscope and Jung's principle of synchronicity are both ways of returning to an older understanding of reality.

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The great bull god El and the dying and rising god Baal, with his consort Anat, were worshipped in rites which were ceaselessly denounced by the Old Testament prophets; yet nevertheless, their pagan temples withstood Syria's official adoption of Christianity

SYRIA AND PALESTINE

THE FULLEST contemporary record of religion in Syria is the texts in alphabetic cuneiform from ancient Ugarit, Ras Shamra, about 12 miles north of Latakkia and two miles from the coast. Theophoric names (personal name including in its form a divine name) as in the Egyptian Execration texts, lists of offerings to various gods, ritual texts, incidental references in legends and above all myths of the fertility cult illustrate the religion of Syria in the 14th century BC. The many gods, both Semitic and non-Semitic, reflect the mixed population of this city in north Syria, but only the cult of the fertility god Baal (see BAAL) and the goddess Anat and their associates is documented sufficiently to permit a reconstruction of the cult.

From these texts we learn that the senior god was El ('god'), the King Paramount, Father of the Exalted Ones and Father of Men and Creator, depicted as enthroned at the remote 'source of the streams'. His strength and procreative influence is expressed in his title 'the Bull', but he was the principal god in social relationship and this aspect of his character is expresse by his title, 'the Kindly, the Compassionate

El's executive king is Baal, whose prop name was Hadad ('the Thunderer') or Ba Ramman ('the Thunderer'), which Jewis scribes parodied as Rimmon ('pom granate'). He establishes his kingly pow and order in Nature in a primeval confli with Sea-and-Ocean Currents and ass ciated monsters like Letan (Leviathan the Old Testament) and Tannin, al

Goats figure frequently in the religious art western Asia: he-goat in a thicket, in gold an lapis lazuli, from Ur in Mesopotamia, the cit which Abraham, the Jewish patriarch, left t settle in Canaan

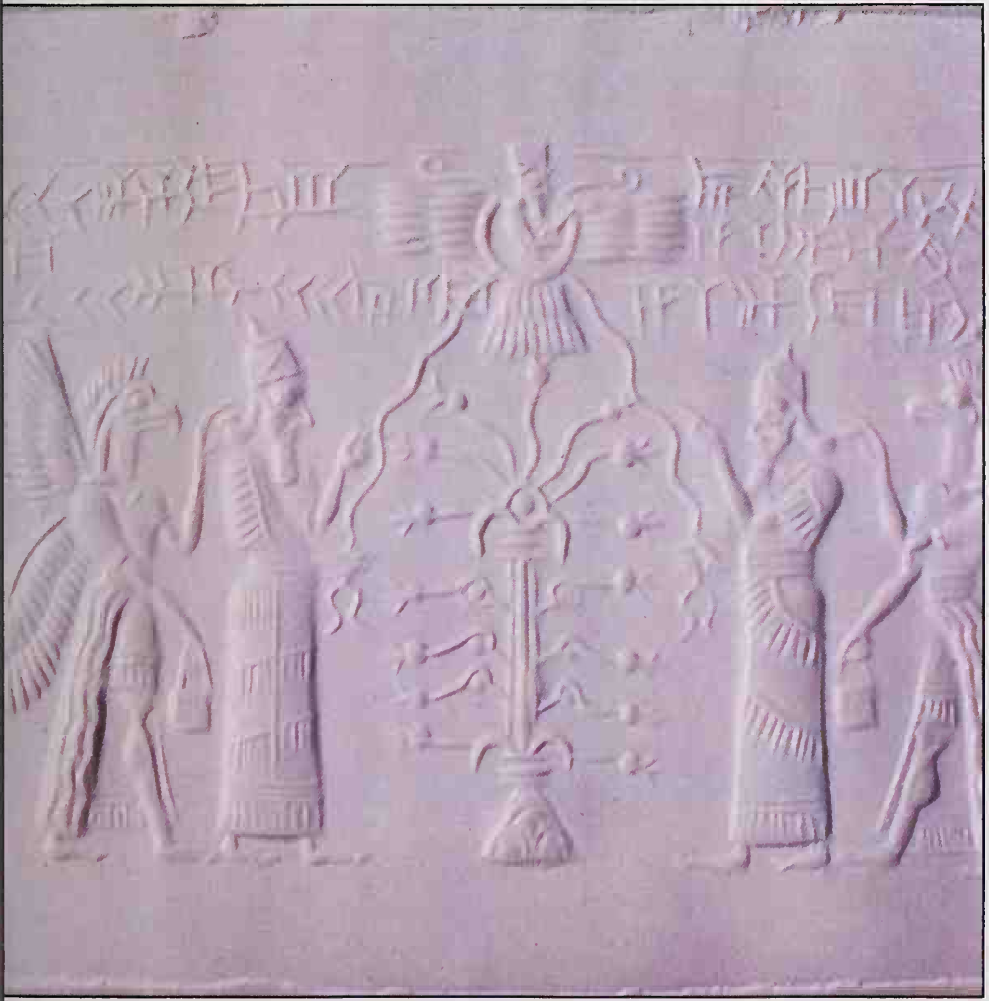
nown in this connection in the Old Testaient, and has his 'house' built as a visible oken that he is the reigning king. He is bliged, however, to reassert his kingship in seasonal conflict against Sterility, or eath (Mot) in a myth which is believed to e related to the chief seasonal crisis in yria, at the autumn equinox.

he Fertility Cult

n this myth Baal is the god of thunder, ghtning and winter rains, 'He who Mounts he Clouds', and is, like the Mesopotamian ammuz, a dying and rising god, whose forunes fluctuate with the vegetation he pronotes (see DYING GOD). In his eclipse in the ummer season his sister and consort Anat he north Syrian counterpart of Astarte; e ASTARTE) is particularly active. Baal, the vegetation he promotes, succumbs to lot. His dead body is sought over hill and le by Anat, called in the Ras Shamra xts 'the Virgin Anat', a rite which had its unterpart in the fertility cult throughout e Near East (see APHRODITE; DEMETER; SIRIS; TAMMUZ). There is definite reflecon of the mourning of Anat on the recovery d burial of the body of Baal in the Old estament (Zechariah 12.11) in 'the ourning for Hadad-Rimmon in the plain Megiddo'. Anat proceeds to avenge Baal. he cuts down Mot, winnows him, parches im with fire, grinds him with a millstone nd scatters his remains in the fields for the irds to eat. This obviously relates to the esacralization of the new crop, setting it ee for common use, as in the offering of the first sheaf of 'new grain from fresh ears, parched with fire,' in Leviticus 2.14.

In myth related to ritual strict logical consistency is not expected, and Baal revives. His revival is anticipated in a dream by El, who is the final authority in these texts and intervenes at significant junctures to confirm a decision or to foreshadow the future. El's vision is of the skies raining olive oil and the wadis running with honey, which recurs in the liturgies of Israel reflected in Amos 9.13 and Joel 3.18. With similar lack of consistency Mot is introduced in a final 'showdown' with Baal, out of which Baal emerges victor and again vindicates his kingship. This conflict is set 'in the seventh year' and may be related to the seven-year cycle marked in Israel by an artificial famine, when the land lay fallow on the principle that drought must be given full play in order that its force might be exhausted. Thus in the seasonal tension after the long dry summer, pending the coming of the 'early rains', the Syrian peasant relieved his anxiety and predisposed providence by homoeopathic magic, which was the genesis of drama in Greece in the cult of the wine god Dionysus at Athens. In Syria no such dramas are attested, but all the elements of drama are in the Baal myth.

The Canaanite mother goddess Athirat or Ashera, was probably a form of the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar, shown with a palm tree on this Assyrian seal: the fertility rites of Canaan were fiercely denounced by the Old Testament prophets



Michael Holford

It will be seen that Israel inherited this liturgic theme of the great autumn festival, which she developed in the light of her own historical tradition of the great deliverance from Egypt and the Covenant, but the essential features of the seasonal festival survive, conflict with the forces of destruction and disorder, the demonstration of the effective kingship of God and the establishment of his government, often by judgement. This is expressed notably in the Enthronement psalms in the Old Testament, in passages in the Prophets which reflect this liturgical theme and in passages on the Day of the Lord in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic, for example, Revelation. There the sea and certain sea monsters are arch-enemies of God's ordered government, as in the Baal myth of Ras Shamra in the New Year festival in Canaan.

The role of the king in his sacral function as executive of Baal as the Divine King in his 'passion' and triumph in the great autumn festival cannot be established on the evidence of the Ras Shamra texts, but on the analogy of the corresponding occasion in Mesopotamian religion it is likely. With the necessary changes, it may certainly be demonstrated that in Jerusalem the Davidic king was the temporal guarantee of the effective Kingship of God, which was expressed in the liturgy of the great autumn festival. For Canaan Ezekiel's denunciation of the King of Tyre (chapter 28) expresses the conception of the king as the representative of God, the channel of divine blessings, and, as representative of the community, the royal man in the garden of God. The Legend of King Krt at Ras Shamra speaks of the king as 'the son of El', and the crown prince is 'suckled by the fertility goddesses Anat and Athirat'. The conception of the king as the upholder of the social justice which is the concern of God is expressed in the royal texts from Ras Shamra and, as in Psalm 72 and Isaiah 11.1–9, he is the medium of blessings in Nature. It is not difficult to see here an ideology from which the conception of the Messiah in Israel developed.

The protagonists of this cult are well known through texts, sculpture and figurines. Baal is the active young warrior god, El is an elderly god on his throne and footstool, both being associated with the bull in virtue of procreative interests. Anat, like Astarte in the Old Testament, is the goddess of love, and appears naked in moulded reliefs and pendants, either devoted to shrines or given in return for the payment of a vow and used as amulets to promote childbirth. Sexual rites of imitative magic associated with the Canaanite fertility cult survived in Israel and are constantly denounced by the Prophets. Anat was also the goddess of war, like Ishtar in Mesopotamia, and is involved in what is evidently a bloody massacre in her temple in an episode in the Baal myth at Ras Shamra, which may really describe a blood-letting rite, like the self-laceration of the devotees of Baal at Carmel (1 Kings 18.28), or perhaps circumcision. The mother goddess Athirat (Ashera of the Old Testament) appears as the consort of El, and is probably the goddess represented as the nourisher of life who offers ears of corn to

Bronze figures of Canaanite gods, thought to be El, the father of gods and men, kindly and compassionate (*left*); and Baal, god of storm and the winter rains (*right*)
***Facing page, above* Roman ruins at Palmyra in Syria, where the moon god was venerated by the caravan merchants *Below* ruins of a temple to Baal in Tunisia**

C M Dixon

two rampant caprids (goats) on an ivory relief from the seaward quarter of Ugarit. The motif is a development of the rampant caprids reaching up to the fruit of the Tree of Life, which is familiar throughout the Near East. In the references in the Old Testament to the *ashera* as a feature of sanctuaries this is a tree, either natural or stylized, representing the mother goddess Ashera as the receptive element in Nature and as the universal nourisher. The Tree of Life is closely associated in the ancient Near East with the king in his sacral function as mediator of the divine blessing, as in Assyrian sculpture and on the royal couch from the palace of Ras Shamra.

The Will of the Gods

Significant as the fertility cult of Canaan undoubtedly was, it is possible that the dramatic nature of the Baal myth gives an incomplete picture of the actual situation. In royal legends for instance, in dynastic succession and other historical and social situations the predominant deity is not Baal but El, to whom chiefly sacrifice is made in a fast-liturgy on the occasion of a national emergency. This and a certain text from Ras Shamra containing oaths by certain attributes of El indicate a more spiritual conception of El, which is nearer to the Hebrew conception of God.

Among many other deities in Canaanite religion Dagan, the god of corn (*dagon*), is known at Ras Shamra from offering lists, from Baal's stock epithet 'the Son of Dagan', and from dedication inscriptions on stelae from a temple adjoining that of Baal at Ras Shamra, which dates from c 2000 BC. Reshef was the god who slew men by war and plague. He is known from Egyptian sculpture and may be recognized in bronze figurines of a striding warrior with offensive weapon and shield, well known from archeological sites in Syria and Palestine. In one of the Ras Shamra texts he is called Reshef of the Arrow, and in the Graeco-Roman period he was assimilated to Apollo with his pestilential arrows. From later inscriptions from Sidon, Eshmun is known as the god of healing, assimilated to Asclepius in the Graeco-Roman period, as Baal was to Hercules, by whose labours also order was sustained against the constant menace of chaos. The sun, regarded as a goddess, is a minor figure in the Baal myth of Ras Shamra, and the moon god and his consort Nikkal were also worshipped, particularly at Harran in north-west Mesopotamia, and in north Syria (see HARRANIAN RELIGION). Ritual texts from Ras Shamra indicate that special rites and sacrifices, in which the king was involved, were observed at certain days of the month, probably at lunar phases.

The will of the various gods was consulted and communicated in various ways. In the 2nd century AD, Lucian of Samosata mentions oracles according to the movement of statues of the gods, doubtless at the manipulation of priests in response to specific questions, conveying a simple 'Yes' or 'No', like the sacred lots Urim and Thummim in early Israel. Divination by the entrails of sacrificed animals was also practised, the liver being especially significant, as is indicated by clay models from archeological sites, charted and annotated for consultation or instruction. The medieval Arab writer Ibn an-Nadim mentions divination at Harran by the direction of the gaze or the expression in the eyes of the dying victim. Texts from the Amorite city of Mari on the mid-Euphrates mention diviners who consulted the auspices in this way and communicated their findings to the king in matters of ritual or state. There were also communications by ecstatic devotees, who suggest 'the sons of the prophets' in the Old Testament and dervishes of later Islam.

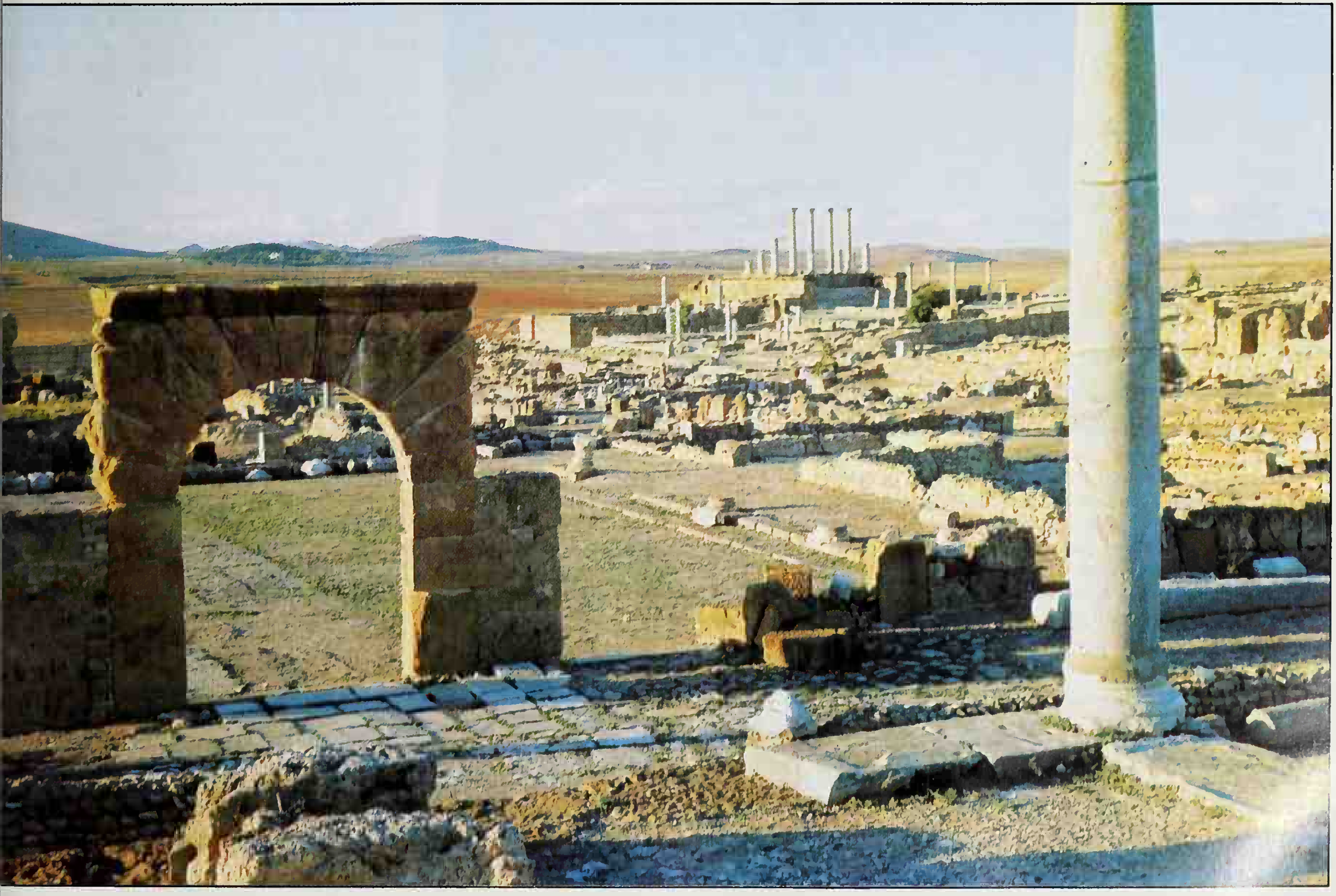
At Byblos c1100 BC there is an instance of the will of the god communicated to the king in an affair of state by an ecstatic of his household and considered authentic by the king. The account of the distress of King Saul before his last battle (1 Samuel 28) mentions prophets and dreams as the media of the communication of the will of God in a crisis, and the patriarchal narratives in the Old Testament and the passage in the Baal myth where El sees the revival of Baal in a dream indicate the significance attached to dreams as communications of the will of God in future events or on the significance of the present situation. People would often resort to shrines in ritual incubation when dreams were taken as sure communications of the purpose of the god.

The temple in Syria varied in form, bu the general conception was a large area within the sacred precinct in which the temple proper was the focal feature. This conception is best illustrated in the sanctuary of Bel, or Baal, in the early Roman period at Palmyra in the Syrian deser and the Moslem sacred precinct at Jerusalem. At Ras Shamra and Hazor in the 14th–13th centuries BC, the tripartite temple is known, comprising an outer cour with a great altar, shallow vestibule, main nave and inmost shrine, or 'Holy of Holies' This is the plan of Solomon's Temple a Jerusalem, which was constructed by Phoenician craftsmen. Administrative texts from Ras Shamra attest hereditary office in a large number of professions among temple personnel, priests, votaries both male and female, temple prostitutes, singers, makers of sacred vestments, sculptors, potters launderers, slaughterers, augurers, or possibly Temple herdsmen, and merchants who traded on account of the Temple. The king of course was the supreme priest, though except on special occasions he would delegate his duties.

Sacrifice of the Infants

The myths and legends of Ras Shamra in their fuller context amplify the simple listing of various types of sacrifice in the offering lists. Thus from the description

Alan Irvine



Sonia Halliday

Baal Ramman, 'the Thunderer', is named in a large number of myths from texts discovered at Ras Shamra in Syria. As Baal Hammon, he was the principal god of Carthage, the Phoenician colony in North Africa: the name Hammon may be a distortion of Ramman, or derive from Ammon, god of the Siwa oasis in Libya: statue of 1st century AD, from Tunisia

Sonia Halliday

of the duties of the son and heir of the king in the royal legend of Prince Aqhat at Ras Shamra it is known that communion meals were eaten in the sanctuary. The blood and vitals were offered to the god, and the rest was cooked and eaten by the community, thus effecting solidarity of the participants with the god and with one another. The shrine might also house memorials of the ancestors of the community, represented by standing stones, as in the Canaanite sanctuary of Hazor, and probably also at Gezer. By offerings at this tangible token of a favoured ancestor the community hoped to continue to share in the blessing which had been his.

Besides communion sacrifices there were those that were offered wholly to the gods either as food or as an act of total renunciation on the part of the worshipper, being wholly burnt on the altar; and other such offerings were made for purification, as doves were sacrificed in Israel after childbirth, and as firstlings of crop and flock and of game in hunting. In Israel and among the Carthaginians in North Africa animals were sacrificed in redemption of first-born sons, and this was almost certainly done also in Syria.

Archeological evidence has been claimed from Gezer and Tell al-Fara by Nablus for foundation sacrifice of children, but this is disputed. Multiple infant sacrifice, however, is attested by jars full of calcined bones of infants and young animals from the sanctuary of the fertility goddess Tanit at the Tyrian colony of Carthage (see PHOENICIANS), in Punic inscriptions and in th writings of the African Church father Tertullian (3rd century AD). Those ma have been first-born children dedicate thus as firstlings, but in King Mesha' sacrifice of his eldest son (2 Kings 3), lik those in Judah in the latter period of th kingdom, they may have been sacrifices i extremity, to which Philo of Byblos (64–161 AD) alludes. Other cases, such as that whic Diodorus Siculus attributes to the Carthaginians in Sicily after a victory over th Greeks in 307 BC, may be a case of 'death-devotion' (*herem*), a great act of renunciation of the spoils of war, to which Kin Mesha also refers in his inscription recording his war of liberation from Israel (c 83 BC). The sacrifices would thus correspon to Samuel's 'hewing Agag in pieces befor the Lord' (1 Samuel 15.33).

The Dead and the Afterlife

Besides the commemoration of the dead a recipients of the divine favour ritual text from Ras Shamra refer to the family go (*'il 'ib*), certain of these alluding to 'offering at the aperture of the divine ancestor'. Thi is amplified by the discovery of grave installations of such apertures as pipes o bottomless jars to communicate offerings especially libations, to the defunct, probabl to promote fertility of the earth, over whic the dead were believed to have some influence. Such offerings to the dead may b the substance of the ban on offerings of portion of the harvest to the dead in Deuteronomy 26.14. The dead were terme *repa'im* by the Phoenicians as in Israel, th name for the 'weak' shades in the Old Testament, and were possibly referred to i funerary inscriptions of King Tabnith o Sidon (5th century BC) as 'divine', or a least supernatural, as in the passage o King Saul and the Witch of Endor (1 Samue 28.13), where the shade of Samuel is described as 'a god'. In this case the king sough revelation of the future.

As recipients of offerings, givers of fertility and revealers of the future, the departe in ancient Syria were regarded as not quit defunct. The Aramaean king Panamm in his inscription (c 750 BC) expects hi descendants to invoke him when they mak an offering to Baal, so that 'his soul may ea and drink with Baal'. The existence of th shade in the gloomy underworld is familia in the Old Testament, particularly in Jo chapter 3. Though quite undesirable thi was apparently still an existence, howeve insubstantial, and this attenuated lif was sustained by offerings, particular libations, though one of the more recentl discovered texts from Ras Shamra refers t animal sacrifice 'for the life of the famil god', or the divine ancestor. The belief i his insubstantial life of the dead who equire to be revived by libation survives mong Arab peasants in Syria and Palestine, ho believe that the dead come at dusk to ells, springs and rivers to drink; however, his was but a tenuous existence. In the egend of Prince Aqhat in the Ras Shamra xts occurs the passage:

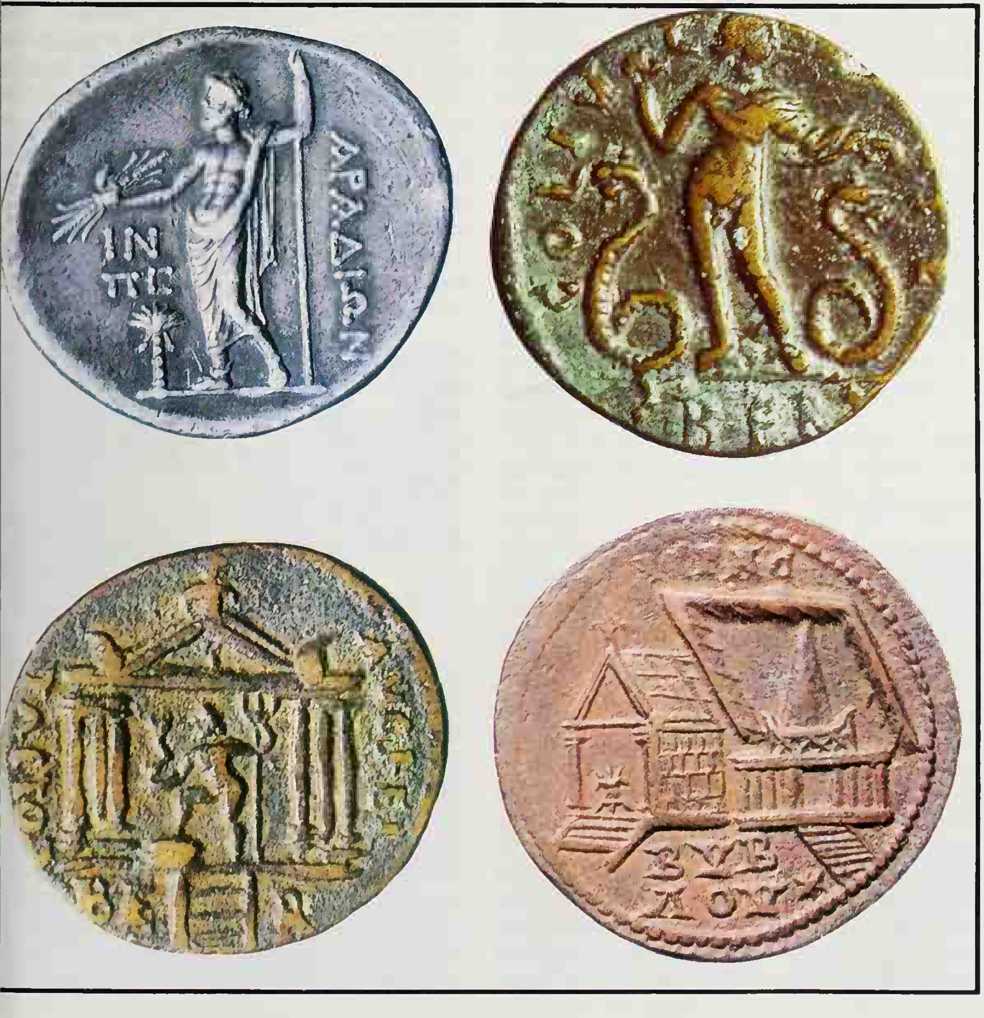
> As for mortal man, what does he get as his
> latter end?
> What does mortal man get as his inheritance?
> Glaze will be poured out on my head,
> Even plaster on my pate,
> And the death of all men will I die,
> Yea I shall surely die.

hese lines express the typical view of the terlife in ancient Canaan.

ncantations and Amulets

part from the regular cults, men in Syria, elsewhere and at all times, sought to nlist the powers of the supernatural or to ard off their evil influences by charms and mulets. Prophylactic charms in Aramaic e known, and at least one excerpt from the aal myth of Ras Shamra was probably sed as an aphrodisiac charm. The figurines the nude fertility goddess were probably so used to promote procreation and childrth. Besides, a great number of amulets ave been found in excavations. Those are hiefly Egyptian, the cat and the intelligent pe, the hippopotamus, which was both a nister force to be placated as the represenative of chaos or, in the form of an upright male, a beneficent patroness of mothers. The grotesque dwarf Bes, the protector of children and pregnant women was also popular. From the Egyptian cult of the fertility god Osiris, the goddess Isis and their son Horus, who survived a hazardous infancy to avenge Osiris' death (see HORUS), small images of the infant Horus were favourite amulets, and also the 'Eye of Horus' with its fertilizing tear-drops. Small gold flies and other insects resembling lice, which were found by Sir Flinders Petrie at a site at the mouth of the Wadi Ghazzeh in Palestine, may have had a prophylactic purpose to ward off disease, like the gold mice referred to in 1 Samuel 6.4, which were sent back with the ark by the Philistines.

In describing the religion of Syria the documents of Ras Shamra have been taken as the basis of this account, firstly because they are a contemporary statement, the fullest and most reliable that is available, and secondly because they document the fertility cult, which was the most conspicuous aspect of local religion that impressed Israel as she settled in Palestine. Ugarit, however, was but one city state in Syria, and in the history of the land it is notable that, despite a general community of religion in any given period, there were local variations and different emphases. So too over the long period of paganism, until Christianity was established as the faith of the majority (c 500 AD), different variations of the old religion developed through time and in different localities.



In the Graeco-Roman period the Canaanite gods were identified with classical deities: coins of the 2nd century AD show Baal (*top left*) who was assimilated to Hercules; Eshmun (*top right*) the god of healing, with twin serpents, assimilated to Asclepius; the sea (*bottom left*) assimilated to Poseidon, the city god of Beirut; the sanctuary of Byblos (*bottom right*)

British Museum

The Blood of Adonis

In the settled land the old gods were assimilated to the gods of Greece and Rome, as Baal to Zeus the sky god with his thunderbolt, the fertility goddesses Astarte, Anat, and Ashera to Aphrodite and Juno. Baal in his role as a dying and rising vegetation god was assimilated to Adonis, the lover of Aphrodite, or Venus, but retained his Syrian title Adonis ('lord'); their cult was practised at the source of the River Adonis just south of Beirut. When it ran red, as it did at a certain time in summer, it was considered to be discoloured by the blood of Adonis, who was lamented at that time by the Syrian women. Baal, the divine king who must always struggle to vindicate his kinship and order against the forces of chaos, was assimilated to the labouring Hercules, particularly at Tyre and her colonies in the coastal plain of Palestine south of Jaffa. The god Reshef, with his power of life and death, was assimilated to Apollo with his bow and arrows as plague-shafts, and Anat, the goddess of love and war was assimilated to Athene and Minerva. The sea was assimilated to Poseidon, who appears as the city god of Beirut on coins from the Graeco-Roman period, and the healing god Eshmun to Asclepius with his serpents. The latter was particularly venerated at Sidon, judging from the name Eshmunazzar, which was borne by two kings of Sidon.

In the caravan city of Palmyra, between Damascus and the Euphrates, the needs of the caravan merchants in the first three centuries of the Christian era are indicated by the cult of the moon, which was also venerated at Harran, another great caravan city in north Mesopotamia. The moon had evidently a peculiar significance for those merchants and their distant and protracted enterprises. The Venus star Athtar, the brightest star in those latitudes, the first to rise at evening and the last to disappear in the morning, was also greatly venerated at Palmyra, where as two gods Arsu and Azizu ('the Gracious and the Fierce') they are represented as mounted respectively on a camel and a horse.

Christianity did not easily oust the Nature religion of Syria, even after it became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Indeed when Porphyry the Bishop Elect of Gaza went to his see at the end of the 4th century AD the lusty heathen impeded his journey; and according to his deacon and biographer, there were eight pagan temples and many private shrines in Gaza and only 280 Christians out of between 50,000 and 60,000 inhabitants, and that after an Imperial edict against paganism.

JOHN GRAY

FURTHER READING: John Gray, *The Canaanites* (Thames & Hudson, 1965); *Near Eastern Mythology* (Hamlyn, 1970).

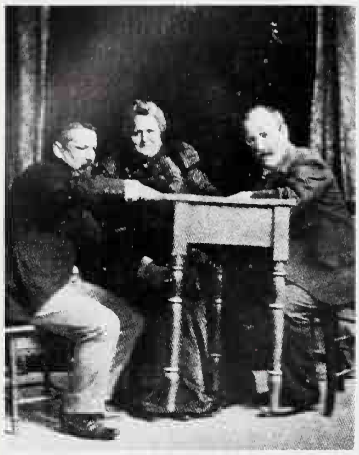


Table Turning

Or table tilting, a popular method of communicating with 'spirits'; the table tilts up and raps on the floor with its foot in response to questions, without being consciously pushed by the experimenters, who rest their fingers on it.
See OUIJA BOARDS.

Rules of behaviour which govern the human uses of things and people, taboos are not isolated restrictions; they are always part of a whole system and cannot be understood outside their social context

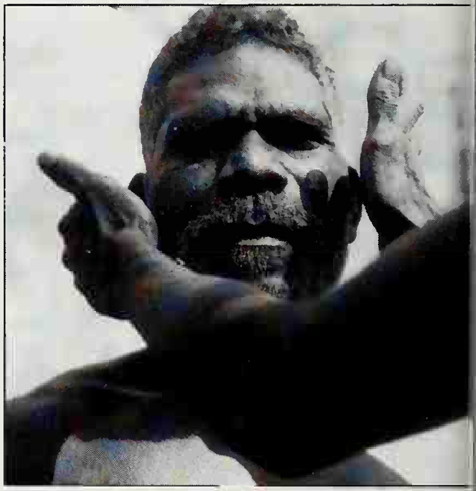
TABOO

A TABOO (sometimes spelt tabu) is a ban or prohibition; the word comes from the Polynesian languages where it means a religious restriction, to break which would entail some automatic punishment. As it is used in English, taboo has little to do with religion. In essence it generally implies a rule which has no meaning, or one which cannot be explained. Captain Cook noted in his log-book that in Tahiti the women were never allowed to eat with the men, and as the men nevertheless enjoyed female company he asked the reason for this taboo. They always replied that they observed it because it was right. To the outsider the taboo is irrational, to the believer its rightness needs no explaining. Though supernatural punishments may not be expected to follow, the rules of any religion rate as taboos to outsiders. For example, the strict Jewish observance forbids the faithful to make and refuel the fire, or light lamps or put them out during the Sabbath, and it also forbids them to ask a Gentile to perform any of these acts. In his book *A Soho Address*, Chaim Lewis, the son of poor Russian Jewish immigrants in London's Soho at the beginning of this century, describes his father's quandary every winter Sabbath: he did not want to let the fire go out and he could not ask any favour outright. Somehow he had to call in a passer-by and drop oblique hints until the stranger understood what service was required. Taboos always tend to land their observers in just such a ridiculous situation, whether it is a Catholic peasant of the Landes who abstains from meat on Friday but eats teal (a bird whose fishy diet entitles it in their custom to be counted as fish), or a Maori hairdresser who after he had cut the chief's hair was not allowed to use his own hands even for feeding himself and had to be fed for a time like a baby.

In the last century, when the word gained currency in European languages, taboo was understood to arise from an inferior mentality. It was argued that primitive tribes observed countless taboos as part of their general ignorance about the physical world. These rules, which seemed so peculiar to Europeans, were the result of false science, leading to mistaken hygiene, and faulty medicine. Essentially the taboo is a ban on touching or eating or speaking or seeing. Its breach will unleash dangers, while keeping the rules would amount to avoiding dangers and sickness. Since the native theory of taboo was concerned to keep certain classes of people and things apart lest misfortune befall, it was a theory about contagion. Our scholars of the last century contrasted this false, primitive fear of contagion with our modern knowledge of disease. Our hygiene protects from a real danger of contagion, their taboos from imaginary danger. This was a comfortably complacent distinction to draw, but hygiene does not correspond to all the rules which are called taboo. Some are as obviously part of primitive religion in the same sense as Friday abstinence and Sabbath rest. European scholars therefore took care to distinguish on the one hand between primitive taboo with a mainly secular reference, and on the other hand rules of magic which infused the practice of primitive religion. They made it even more difficult to understand the meaning of foreign taboos by importing a classification between true religion and primitive magic, and modern medicine and primitive hygiene; and a very complicated web of definitions was based on this misconception.

In the Eye of the Beholder

The difficulty in understanding primitive taboo arose from the difficulty of understanding our own taboos of hygiene and religion. The first mistake was to suppose that our idea of dirt connotes an objectively real class from which real dangers to health may issue, and whose control depends on valid rules of hygiene. It is better to start by realizing that dirt, like beauty, resides in the eye of the beholder. We must be prepared to put our own behaviour under the same microscope we apply to primitive tribes. If we find that they are busy hedging off this area from that, stopping 'X' from touching 'Y', preventing women from eating with men, and creating elaborate scales



Methods of purification in Arnhem Lan
Australia: water is poured over a girl *(belo*
and a man is purified by sweat from another'
armpits *(above)*. Many of the rules of primitiv
societies, breach of which might cause a poll
tion that needed to be cleansed away, used t
be termed taboos, with the implication tha
they stemmed from inadequate knowledge an
inferior mentality: in fact, all societies hav
rules which may appear irrational in isolatio
but are part of a larger and necessary syste
of classification

of edibility and inedibility among the vegetable and animal worlds, we should realize that we too are given to this ordering and classifying activity.

No single taboo can ever make sense by itself. A taboo is always part of a whole system of rules. It makes sense as part of a classification whose meaning is so basic, to those who live by it, that no piecemeal explanation can be given. A native cannot explain the meaning of a taboo in a way that appears reasonable to an inquiring anthropologist, because it forms part of his own machinery of learning. The separate compartments which a taboo system constructs are the framework or instrument of understanding. To turn round and inspect that instrument may seem to be an advanced philosophic exercise, but it is necessary if we are to attempt to understand the subject.

Understanding the Problem

The 19th-century scholars could not understand taboo because they worked within the separate compartments of their own taboo system. For them religion, magic, hygiene and medicine were as distinct from one another as were civilized and primitive; and the problem of understanding taboo was for them principally the problem of reaching an understanding of the processes of native thought. However, put in that form, the problem was insoluble. We can approach it more sympathetically nowadays as a problem in human learning.

First, discard the idea that we have anything like a true, complete view of the world. Between what the scientists know or believe, and what we make of their knowledge or belief, there is a kind of synthesis, which is our own rough and ready approximation of rules concerning how we need to behave in the physical world. Second, discard the idea that there can ever be a final and correct world view. A gain in knowledge in one direction does not guarantee that there will be no loss or distortion in another; the fullness of reality will always evade our comprehension. The reasons for this will become clear.

Learning is a filtering and organizing process. Faced with the same events, two people will not necessarily register two identical patterns, and, faced with a similar environment, two cultures will construe two different sets of natural constraints and regular sequences that can be derived from it. Understanding is largely a process of classification, in which the classifying human mind is much – very much – freer than it supposes itself to be.

The events that need to be understood are unconsciously trimmed and filtered to fit into the classifications that are being used. In this sense every culture constructs its own universe. It attributes to its own world a particular set of powers to be harnessed and dangers to be avoided. Each primitive culture, because of its isolation, has a unique world view. Modern industrial nations, because and insofar as they share a common experience, share much the same rules about the powers and dangers aroused. This is a valid difference between 'Us' and 'Them', *our* primitive taboos and *theirs*.

For all humans, primitive or not, the universe is a system of imputed rules. Using our own types of distinction, we can distinguish: firstly, physical Nature, both inorganic (including rocks, stars, rivers and the movements of the air) and organic (vegetable and animal bodies, with what appear to be rules governing their growth, lifespan and death); secondly, human behaviour and thought; thirdly, the interactions that take place between these two groups; fourthly, other apparently intelligent beings – whether incorporeal like gods, devils and ghosts, or mixtures of human and divine or human and animal; and lastly, the interactions that can be inferred between this fourth group and the rest.

The use of the word supernatural in this context has been avoided. Even a small amount of reading in anthropology shows how very local and peculiar to our own civilization is the distinction between natural and supernatural. The same applies even to such a classification as the one just given. The fact that it is our own local classification is not important for this argument, as the present object is to make clear how taboos should be understood.

Taboos are rules about our behaviour which restrict the human uses of things and people. It is critically important that some of the taboos should be observed in order to avoid punishment or vengeance from gods, ghosts or other spirits. Lack of observance of others is supposed to result automatically in their dreaded effects. Such disasters as crop failures, sickness, hunting accidents, famine, drought, epidemic (events in the physical realm), they may all result from breach of taboos.

The Seat of Mana

Taboos can frequently have the effect of expressing political ideas. For example, the idea of the state as a hierarchy, of which the chief is the undisputed head and his officials higher than the ordinary populace, easily lends itself to taboo behaviour. Gradings of power in the political body tend to be expressed as gradings of freedom to approach the physical body of the person at the top of the system.

As Franz Steiner says, in *Taboo* (1956): 'in Polynesian belief the parts of the body formed a fixed hierarchy which had some analogy with the rank system of society... now the backbone was the most important part of the body, and the limbs that could be regarded as continuations of the backbone derived importance from it. Above the body was, of course, the head, and it was the seat of mana. When we say this, we must realize that by "mana" are meant both the soul aspect, the life force, and a man's ritual status.

'This grading of the limbs concerned people of all ranks and both sexes. It could, for example, be so important to avoid stepping over people's heads that the very architecture was involved: the arrangements of the sleeping rooms show such an adaptation in the Marquesas. The commoner's back or head is thus not without its importance in certain contexts. But the real significance of this grading seems to have been in the possibilities it provided for cumulative effects in association with the rank system.

'The head of a chief was the most concentrated mana object of Polynesian society, and was hedged around with the most terrifying taboos which operated when things were to enter the head or when the head was being diminished; in other words when the chief ate or had his hair cut... the hands of some great chiefs were so dangerous that they could not be put close to the head.'

Since the Polynesian political system was very competitive and chiefs had their ups and downs, great triumphs or total failures, the system of taboo was a kind of public vote of confidence and register of current distributions of power. It is important to appreciate this in order to correct our tendency to think of taboo as a rigidly fixed system of respect.

An Active and Changing Process

We will never understand the working of a taboo system unless we understand the kind of interaction between the different spheres of existence which is assumed within it. Any child growing up in an ordered society learns the different spheres and interactions between them simultaneously. When the anthropologist arrives on the scene, he finds that the system of knowledge is a going concern. It is difficult for him to observe any changes that are being made, so he gets the wrong impression that a given set of taboos is something hard-and-fast which is handed down from generation to generation.

In fact, the classifying process is always active and changing. New classifications are being promoted by some and rejected by others. No political innovation takes place without some basic reclassification. To take a current issue of great political significance: in a stratified society, if it is taboo for lower classes or blacks to sit down at table or to take part in sporting events with upper classes or whites, those who assert the rule can make it so much the stronger if they can propose a basis in Nature which appears to support the behaviour they regard as right.

If women in Tahiti are forbidden to eat with men, or in Europe to enter certain male occupations, some ultimate justification for the rule needs to be found. Usually it is traced back to their physical nature. Women are said to be constitutionally feeble, nervous or flighty; blacks to smell different; lower classes to be hereditarily less intelligent.

Rules of the Game

Perhaps the easiest approach is to try to imagine what social life would be like without any classification. It would be like playing a game without any rules; no one would know what to do, which way to run, who was on his side or against him. There would be no game.

It is no exaggeration to describe social life as the process of building classification systems. Everyone is trying to make sense of what is happening. He is trying to make

Uniphoto (London)

sense of his own behaviour, past and present, so as to capture and hold some sense of identity. He is trying to hold other people to their promises and ensure some kind of regular future. He is explaining the world continually, to himself and to everyone else.

In the process of explaining, classifications are developed and more and more meanings successfully added to them, as other people are persuaded to interpret events in the same way. Gradually even the points of the compass get loaded with social meanings.

For example, the west room in an Irish farmer's house used to be the room where the old couple retired to, when the eldest son married and brought his wife to the farm. West meant retirement as well as sundown. In the Buddhist religion (and to a considerable extent in Christianity), east is the high status point; Buddha's statue is on a shelf on the east wall of the east room; the husband always sleeps to the east of his wife. So, in the Buddhist world, east means male, and social superior.

Up and down, right and left, sun and moon, hot and cold, all the physical antitheses are able to carry meanings from social life, and in a rich and steady culture there is a steady core of such agreed classifications. Anyone who is prepared to support the social system finds himself impelled to uphold the classification system which gets meaning from it. Anyone who wants to challenge the social system finds himself up against a set of manifold classifications

Strict taboo, of one kind or another, is exercised by all socially organized communities, and many examples can be found even in the modern industrial West, but it remains particularly prevalent among primitive societies, and in the social and religious systems of the East *Above left* A street seller of dye for caste-marks, in India: the Hindu caste system continues to involve elaborate taboos which strictly regulate social relationships between the castes *Above right* Street scene in Morocco: for more than a thousand years it has been generally taboo in Islamic countries for women to appear unveiled out of doors *Below* A ban on wearing shoes on holy ground is a common religious rule in many cultures, and particularly in Islam: special slippers are provided for worshippers at a mosque

which will have to be rethought.

This is why breach of taboo arouses such strong feelings. It is not because the minor classification is threatened, but because the whole social system (in which a great investment has been made) appears to be tottering, if someone can get away successfully with challenging a taboo.

Difficulties of Classification

Classification involves definition; definition involves reducing ambiguity; ambiguity arises in several ways and it is wrong to think that it can ever be excluded. To take the classification of animal species, they can be classified, either according to their physical features, or according to the habitat they live in, or according to how they behave. This gives three ways of classifying animals, each of which would place the same beasts in different classes. Classed by behaviour, using walking, swimming or flying as basic criteria, penguins would be nearer to fish, whereas flying fish could be classified as birds; classed by bone structure and egg laying, penguins would count more clearly as birds, while flying fish would be recognized as fish.

Animal life, therefore, is much more untidy and difficult to fit into a regular system of classification than at first appears. Human social life is even more untidy. Girls can behave like boys, men can behave like women, there are adults who refuse to grow up, every year a few are born whose physical make-up is not clearly male or female.

The rules of marriage and inheritance require clear-cut categories to be established, but always there will be some cases which do not fit the regularities of the system, because such human classifications are always too crude for reality.

A system of taboos covers up this weakness of the classification system. It points in advance to defects and insists that no one shall give recognition to the inconvenient facts or behave in such a way as to undermine the acceptability and clarity of the system as a whole. It stops the asking of awkward questions and prevents awkward developments.

Sometimes the taboo ban appears in ways that seem a long way from their point of origin. For example, among the Lele tribe, in the Kasai district of the Congo, it was taboo to bring fishing equipment direct into the village from the streams or lakes where it had been in use. All round the village fishing traps and baskets would be hung in trees overnight. Ask the Lele why they did this and they replied that coughs and disease would enter the village if the fishing things were not left out each night.

No other answer could be got from them, except elaboration of the danger and how sorcerers could enter the village if this barrier were not kept up. But another kind of answer lay in the mass of other rules and regulations which separated the village and its human social life from the forest and streams and animal life. This was the basic classification at stake; one which never needed to be explained because it was too fundamental to mention.

The novelist William Burroughs describes the final experiences of disgust and depression of some forms of drug addiction. What he calls the 'Naked Lunch' is the point where all illusions are stripped away and every thing is seen as it really is. When everyone can see what is on everyone's fork, nothing is classed as inedible. Meat can be animal or human flesh, caterpillars, worms or bugs; soup is equally urine, lentils, scotch broth or excreta; other people are neither friends nor enemies, nor is oneself different from other people since neither has any very clear definition.

Identities and classifications are merged into a seething, shapeless experience. This is the potential disorder of the mind which taboo breaks up into classes and rules and so judges some activities as right and proper and others as horrifying.

This kind of rationality is the justification for the taboos which we ourselves observe when we separate the lavatory from the living room and the bed from the kitchen, injecting order into the house. But the order is not arbitrary; it derives from social categories. When a set of social distinctions weakens, the taboos that expressed it weaken too.

For this reason sex taboos used to be sacred in Western countries but are no longer so strong. It seems ridiculous that women should not be allowed in some clubs or professions, whereas not so long ago it seemed obviously right. The same goes for the insistence upon privacy, the same for hierarchies. The less we ourselves are forced to adopt such unthinking taboo attitudes to breaches of these boundaries, the easier it becomes to look dispassionately at the taboos of other societies and find plenty of meaning in them.

VOTES FOR WOMEN
VOTES FOR

Keystone

In the West women and 'dirt' have long been the subjects of powerful taboos, and in some societies the two have been equated, resulting in the exclusion of women from many male rights and privileges: suffragettes campaigning for votes for women

In some tribal societies it is thought that the shedding of blood will cause drought and other environmental disasters. Elsewhere any contact with death is dangerously polluting, and burials are followed by elaborate washing ceremonies and fumigation. In other places they fear neither homicide nor death pollution, but menstrual blood is thought to be very dangerous to touch (see MENSTRUATION). And in other places again, adultery is considered liable to cause illness.

Upholding the Cultural System

Some people are thickly beset with taboos so that everything they do is charged with social symbolism. Others observe only one or two rules. Those who are most taboo-minded have the most complex set of social boundaries to preserve. Hence their investment of so much energy into the control of behaviour.

A taboo system upholds a cultural system and a culture is a pattern of values and norms; social life is impossible without such a pattern. This is the dilemma of individual freedom. Ideally we would like to feel free to make every choice from scratch and judge each case on its merits. Such a freedom would slow us down, for every choice would have to be consciously deliberated. On the one hand, education tries to equip a person with means for exercising private judgement, and on the other hand, the techniques of education provide a kind of mechanical decision-making, along well-oiled grooves. They inculcate strong reactions of anxiety concerning anything which threatens to go off the track.

As education transmits culture, taboos and all, it could be considered a kind of brain-washing. It only allows a certain way of seeing reality and so limits the scope for private judgement. However, without the taboos, which turn basic classifications into automatic psychological reflexes, no thinking could be effective because, if every system of classification was up for revision at every moment, there would be no stability of thought. Hence there would be no scope for experience to accumulate into knowledge.

Taboos bar the way for the mind to visualize reality differently. But the barriers they set up are not arbitrary, for taboos flow from social boundaries and support the social structure. This accounts for their seeming to be irrational to the outsider and beyond challenge to the person living within the society.

(See also FOOD AND DRINK; MANA; MAORI; POLYNESIA.)

MARY DOUGLAS

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Likened to a sword and a shield, a talisman may be defined as an object which has been magically endowed with the power of attracting good fortune, while an amulet is something which naturally possesses protective properties

TALISMANS

THE WORD TALISMAN is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as an 'object engraven with figures or characters to which are attributed the occult powers of the planetary influences and celestial configurations under which it was made; usually worn as an amulet to avert evil or bring fortune to the wearer'. The word is traced to the Greek *telesma*, meaning in this case a consecrated object, one over which a rite has been completed. An amulet, according to the same authority, is 'anything worn about the person as a charm or preventive against evil, mischief, disease, witchcraft, etc.': its derivation is traced through the Latin, *amuletum*.

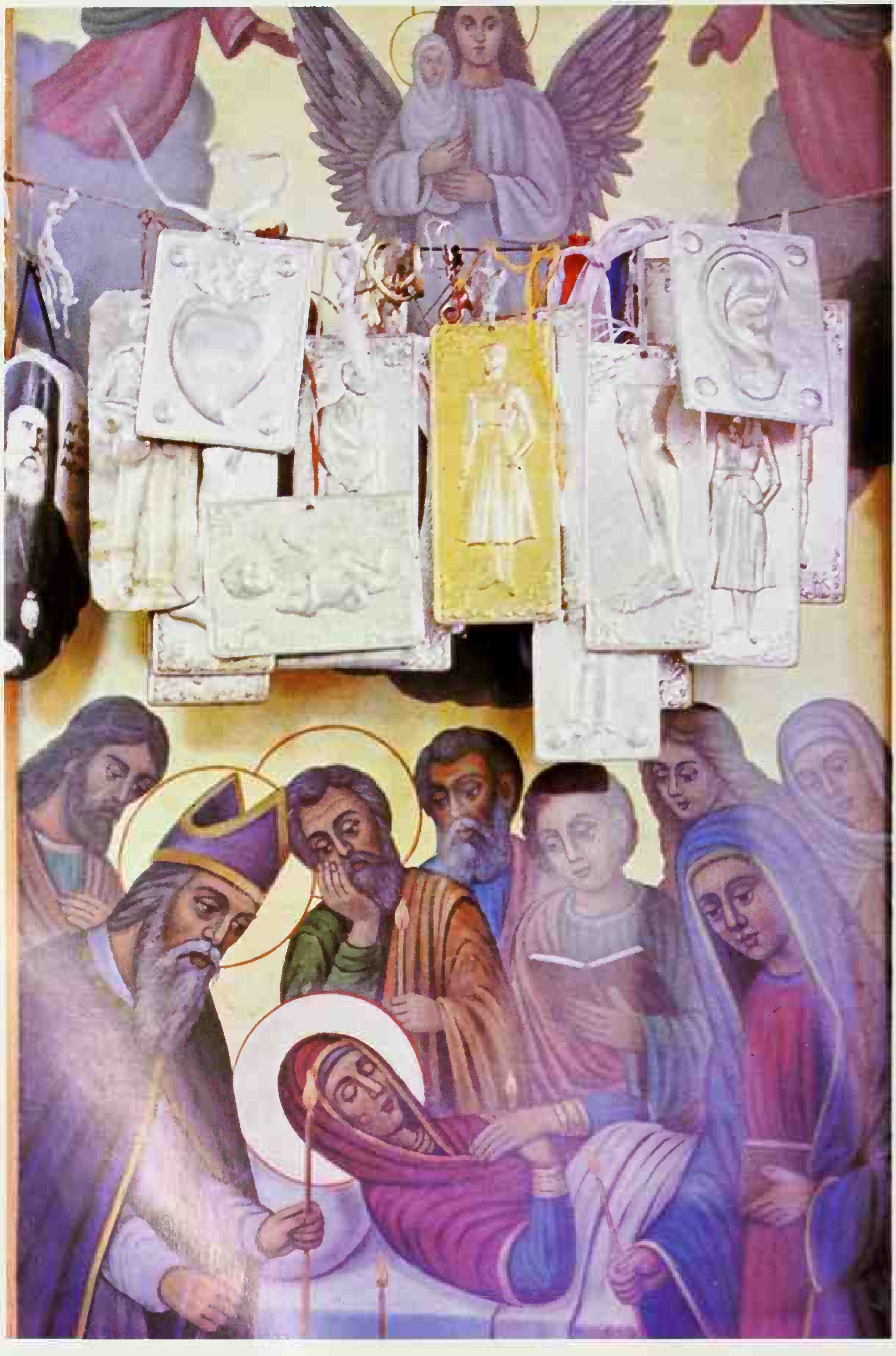
It will be seen that in these definitions no clear distinction is made between amulets and talismans. According to Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, the Egyptologist, expert opinion is divided on the subject; he himself considered that the essential difference between an amulet and a talisman is that while an amulet exercises its protective powers continuously and in general over its owner, a talisman is called upon to perform some isolated task of protection. In this article it is proposed to treat the two as differing in nature. A talisman is an object ceremonially endowed with the power of attracting favourable influences: it reinforces, and may be thought of as a sword. An amulet is an object naturally possessing the power of turning away evil or undesired influences: it *protects*, and may be likened to a shield.

The idea that special influence, luck, or protection is somehow inherent in objects is universal. Anthropologists have collected great stores of information on the subject of *mana* (see MANA), belief in which directs innumerable customs in many cultures throughout the world. Mana is perhaps especially potent in the substances and fluids of the body, and so might be equated with the idea of 'personal magnetism'. Hence possession of items endowed with mana is possession of the soul-code of the person, a tiny tuning-fork as it were, to which he must automatically respond. So hair, teeth, saliva or blood, are powerful levers in magic, black or white, the psychic equivalent of a telephone number.

From Diamonds to Skulls

Ancient Egypt was pre-eminently the land of amulets. They were worn by the living, and placed in great abundance within the inner coffin of the mummy. The head of the mummy rested on a circular piece of linen inscribed with magical figures. Chief among the mummy amulets were the Uzat or Eye of Horus, left and right eyes representing the sun and moon (see HORUS); the Two Fingers, in obsidian or haematite; and the Five Steps. Probably best known is the scarab beetle, symbol of the sun god Khepri, whose revolutions were pictured in the rolling movement of the beetle (see SCARAB). The list is long: the Buckle of Isis, the Heart, Papyrus Sceptre, the Tet (backbone or tree-trunk), Vulture, Frog, Serpent's Head, Menat, Nefer (a musical instrument), Ankh or life-symbol, and the Sam, symbol of union, and so on. Modern Freemasons would recognize the Angle or Square, symbol of protection, and the Plumb-line. Most of the amulets were fashioned either in certain materials or in certain colours, although they could be in a precious metal such as gold.

All races have traditional amulets. The jungle Negro hangs from his neck his personal charm or *gris-gris*; the Chinese carry an object engraved with a character from the ancient text, the *Shu-Ching*; the Mohammedan a verse from the Koran; the Christian a scapulary or relic; and the Jew fastens at his door a little roll of parchment inscribed with SHADAI, the ninth of the ten divine names of the Cabala. The followers of Zoroaster have an amuletic garment, a sacred shirt and cord which is woven with a peculiar holy thread made of fine wool woven by the wives of Parsee priests, with special invocatory charms. The sacred book, the *Khordah-Avesta* describes how, standing or sitting, and wherever he may be, the garment



G. L. Carlisle

Talismans are objects believed to attract favourable influences, like these tokens hung up in a church to obtain cures or heavenly protection

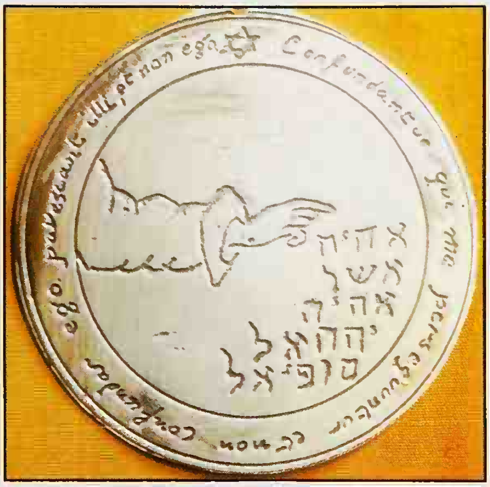
will protect him from injury from slings, arrows, knives or clubs.

Pieces of the wood of the True Cross were held in especial reverence for their power by the Christian nations in the Middle Ages. Although orthodox teaching stated it to be all of oak, some ancient writers maintained that four kinds of wood were used. The stem was of cypress, the cross-piece of cedar, the superscription of board pine, and the block to support the feet, of boxwood.

A wide variety of natural objects from jewels and semi-precious stones (see JEWELS) to berries and animals' hairs have been used as amulets. Coral, especially the red or pink variety, has always been believed to have amuletic properties; and one of the main reasons for its being used with bells on babies' rattles was that it was reputed to safeguard against the Evil Eye (see EYE). Ferdinand I of Spain wore a small branch of coral suspended about his neck, which he would point at anyone whom he suspected of having a malignant influence. In the Middle Ages it was held to be a protection from lightning, storm and witches.

Garnets were popular as amulets in Egypt, where they were known as 'happy stones'; the Romans called them 'loyal stones'. Jet was also highly prized. In 1841 in Cologne a stone coffin of about the 5th century was found which contained, in addition to human remains, beautifully made jet ornaments such as armlets, rings, buckles, necklets and hairpins. Jet was considered valuable not only as a remedy for toothache and tumours, but as a revealer of unfaithfulness. Sardonyx was supposed to ensure marital happiness, and in classical times it also had a reputation as an aid to the eloquence of lawyers. Pliny relates that a lawyer named Paulus hired a sardonyx ring to wear when he defended a wealthy widow; he won his case and the widow as well.

Jade was believed to keep off kidney complaints; and even in this century it has been reported to be effective in curing headaches, when pressed to the forehead. The star sapphire is undoubtedly in the amulet class. It is greatly sought after for this purpose in Thailand, where a tourist was told recently, 'Should the world come to an end, it will protect you from all harm!' Rock crystal is said to stimulate clairvoyance, and was made into polished spheres for crystal-gazing in quite ancient times. A ball of this stone surmounts the sceptre of the Scottish regalia. Some of the crystal balls preserved as healing stones were no doubt originally intended for divination. A diamond is said to have been the Schamir stone in Solomon's magic ring, which was reputed to have the power to preserve his throne.


John Moss

Above Talisman of the moon, intended to harness the moon's influence to protect the wearer against evil *Below, left to right* Lucky charms, from a set of Wills's cigarette cards of the 1920s: jade hei-tiki, used by the Maori in New Zealand; the ankh, the ancient Egyptian symbol of life; hand, making the gesture of blessing; tau cross, protecting against disease and snakebite

Amulets in Reverse

Vegetable and animal products also have a place in the lists of amulets or charms. In India the *rudraksha* berry and beads from the *tulsi* or Indian balsam plant are believed to have properties making them suitable for necklaces of the rosary type. In Africa, the stout hairs from the elephant are plaited into lucky rings, and elsewhere the rabbit's paw has been used as an amulet.

There are several cases of human skulls being associated with a particular family and house, the removal of which is said to affect the owners' fortunes unfavourably. In this sense the skull must be regarded as an amulet (see HAUNTED HOUSES; SKULLS).

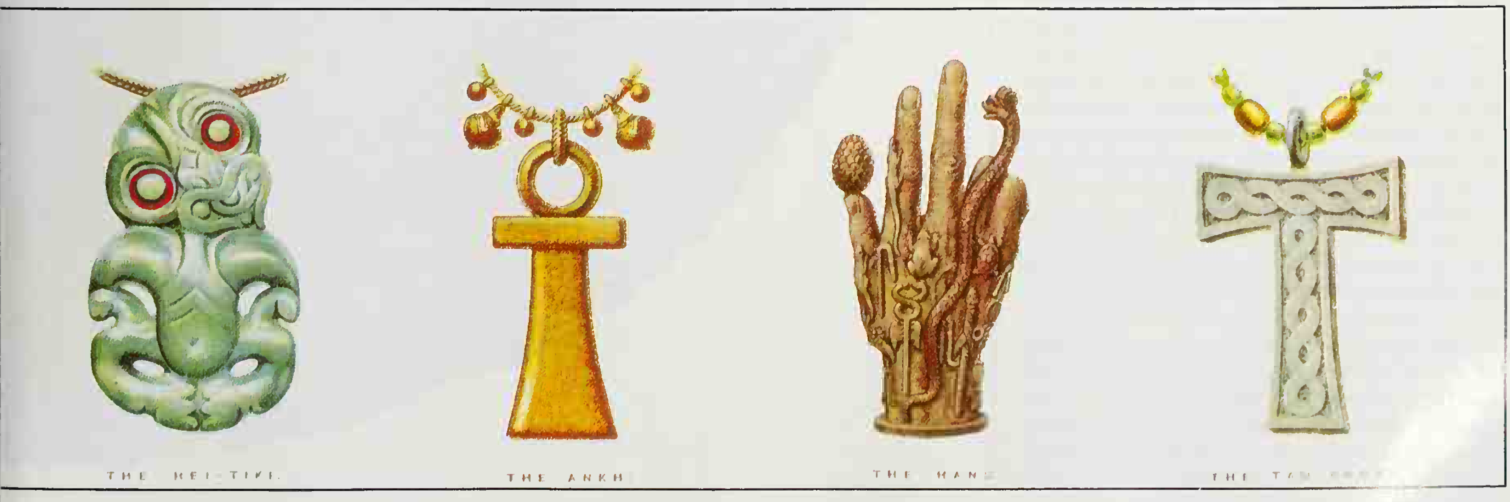
Certain objects, usually gems, have a documented history of bringing evil and disaster upon their possessors, rather than good fortune. The Hope Diamond is perhaps the best known. In 1965 it was disclosed that it had been on loan for study at the De Beers' laboratories in Johannesburg, and it was found that after exposure to ultraviolet light it glowed for several minutes like a red-hot coal, a phenomenon which had not occurred with other diamonds.

It seems as if an atmosphere or aura of violence lingers about these articles, and acts as a kind of detonator when it again enters a field of intense emotions. But this would hardly apply in the case of Mephisto's Ring. This was a ring set with a large and beautiful emerald which came into the possession of the Spanish royal family in the reign of Philip II, who sent the ill-fated Armada. Centuries later the ring was presented to a church at the time of the Spanish-American War of 1898. Soon after, the church burned down, but the ring was rescued and placed in a museum. The museum was severely damaged by lightning and the ring was sent back to the royal family. That same week they received news of the defeat of their navy at Manila. Mephisto's Ring was then sealed up in a strong box and buried in the ground.

The Healing Talisman

A common use of talismans down the ages has been for the purpose of healing. In the New Testament, simple cloths became effective talismans when charged with the power of Paul the Apostle (Acts 19.11–12): 'And God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs and aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them.'

The case of a woman who seemed to be afflicted with an incurable eye inflammation is cited by Eliphas Levi, the 19th century occultist. She was suddenly and mysteriously cured, and confessed to her priest that she had had recourse to magic. For a long time she had pestered a scholar – whom she supposed to be a magician – to give her a written charm to carry, and finally the scholar had given her a little roll of parchment with the advice to wash three times a day in cold water. The priest made her bring the parchment, and when he opened it he found it inscribed in Latin with these words: 'May the devil dig out your eyes and fill the empty spaces with dung!' He



translated the words to the woman, who was thunderstruck, but nevertheless cured.

This anecdote illustrates one aspect of the use and effect of talismans. The wearer's thoughts are constantly turning towards the talismanic object and picturing its purpose or quality. If it has been impregnated by the act of a powerful will, when one who has faith concentrates his thought upon the talisman, he draws from it a strong suggestion which his own will-power reinforces. Even where there is no 'magnetic charge', as apparently in the case of the roll of parchment, the wearer's belief quickly builds up a charge which is effective at subconscious levels.

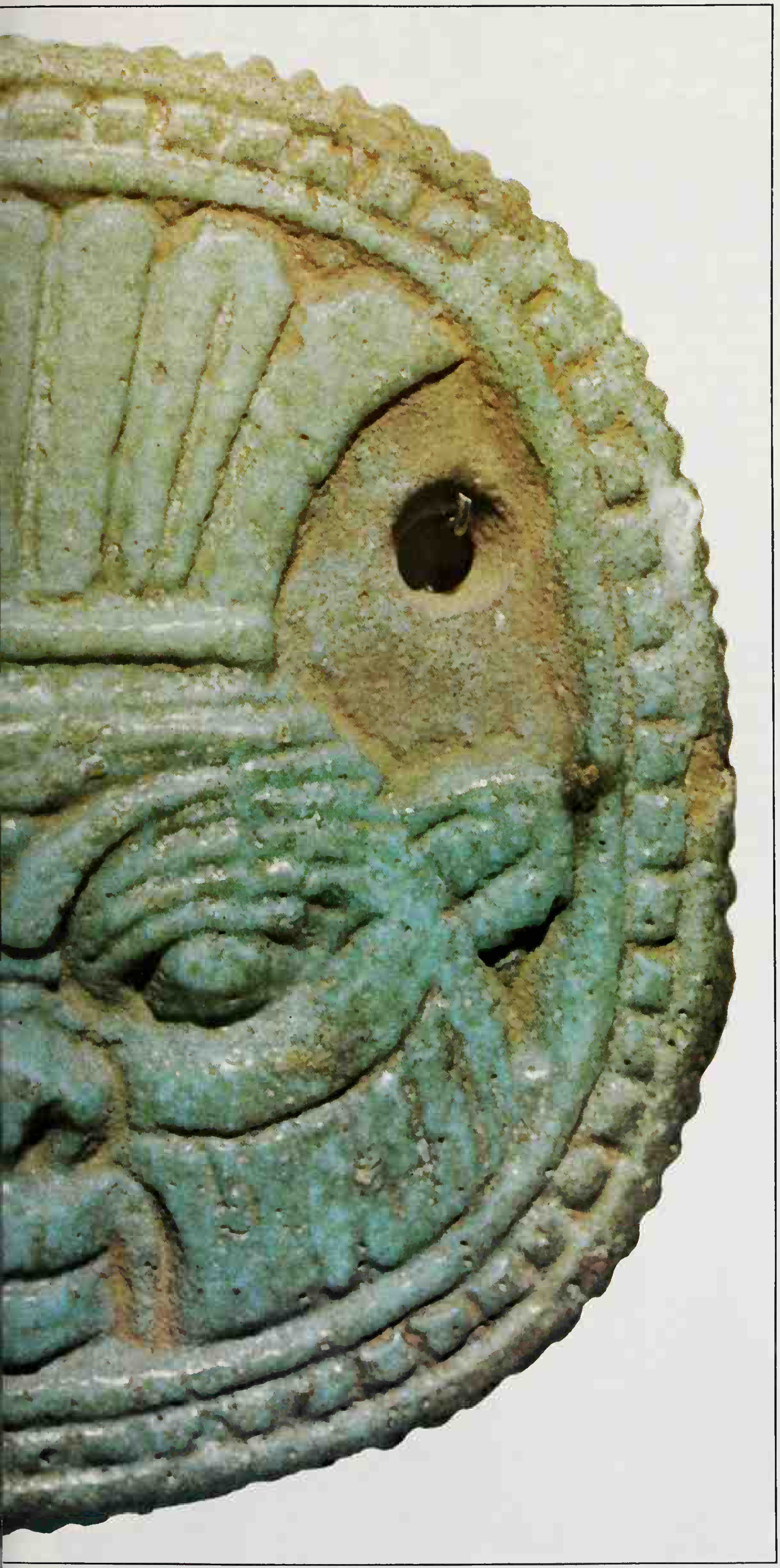
A talisman kept by a Scottish family, the Lee Penny of the Lockharts which is said to have originated with the Moors in Spain in the 14th century, has a long record of healings by water in which it was dipped. Sir Simon Locard of Lee obtained the talisman as part of the ransom of an emir whom he took prisoner in Spain. The emir's mother explained the powers and method of using the penny, which was a silver groat with a dark red triangular stone set in the middle. It could stop bleeding, cure fever, and especially cure animal diseases by means of the water in which it was dipped three times and then swirled round. The last record of its successful use was before the First World War when one of Sir Simon Lockhart's guests accidentally sustained a deep cut in his hand which bled obstinately. Sir Simon 'magnetized' a basin of water with the penny, and the guest soaked his bandaged hand in it. The bleeding stopped, and the cut healed rapidly.

As J. G. Lockhart, who has written a full record of this famous healing stone, says: 'It might be observed that the Lee Penny appears to have been at least as successful in dealing with the complaints of its time as in a later day the Ministry of Agriculture has been in dealing with Foot and Mouth Disease. The Penny was at any rate reputed to cure where the Ministry can only kill.' It was the Lee Penny, incidentally, which inspired one title of Sir Walter Scott's novel, *The Talisman*.

How to Make a Talisman

An old work, Sepharial's *Book of Charms and Talismans* is still widely read for its delightful blend of Hebrew-inscribed medieval cabalistic diagrams and Victorian descriptions of their usefulness. Consider, for example, what the 'Talisman for Travelling on Land or Sea,' engraved on a Monday in silver, can do: 'Train drivers and guards should certainly wear it, and signalmen too. All those who hold any position on board ship from Commodores and Captains down to waiters and stokers should wear it as it will assist from the safety standpoint, will help to prevent seasickness and will cause the ordinary work to seem less arduous.'

Ancient Egyptian amulet, c 1250 BC, showing the head of the popular god Bes, a squat, dwarfish, cheerfully grinning deity, who presided over fun and music, and helped women in childbirth: numerous amulets depicting him have been found



C. M. Dixon

In making a talisman, your will, and to a secondary degree your personal emanation, can impregnate a suitable chosen piece of material with lasting power. You can set up in it a 'field' or charge of a particular type of force. But the material to receive this should be new or virgin, although used material can be cleaned and purified.

The type of material will affect the permanency of the result. Parchment is more enduring than paper and has other advantages; the nobler metals such as platinum, gold, silver, and even nickel, are less absorptive of gross vibrations; while gem stones, containing the most highly developed mineral life, can sing the same vibrational song over thousands of years. Sensitives will tell that this is so in the case of many of the Egyptian symbolic jewels and the inscribed gnostic gems used in initiation ceremonies in the past. The serpent-entwined rod of the caduceus was charged with power and when laid along the spine of the candidate in the Mysteries, produced a stirring of power and intuition in him.

On the other hand, for a temporary purpose, you can make an effective talisman for a friend from a short length of new cord. Holding it, you make a loose knot, and then concentrate with all the intensity you possess on the quality you are to give. When you feel supremely charged, picture that charge pouring down your arms and concentrating in the knot as you pull it tight with a fierce jerk. Make seven knots like this and you have your talisman.

Supposing you wish to give a ring or jewel for a talismanic purpose, the technique is to visualize a sheet of tense etheric matter between the curved forefinger and thumb of your left hand and, holding the object in your right hand, pass it through the web several times with the intent that all past 'magnetism' be combed out. The object can then be made potent by a process of tension and discharge into it, somewhat similar to the knotting procedure just described. All authorities agree that many types of talisman are better enclosed in silk, and not exposed to the gaze of the inquisitive.

Although the human will is the most powerful element in its creation, it is usual to take into account the best possible astrological conditions in deciding the time. It is unwise, say the astrologers, to wear the birthstone traditional for your sign if in your nativity map the sun has serious adverse aspects; so you require to know your personal horoscope. Very few occultists nowadays would care, however, to go through the elaborate ceremonial with dress, colours, and invocations at exactly appropriate times, feeling that they mainly serve as psychological props and aids to concentration.

C. NELSON STEWART

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TAMMUZ

THE HEBREW PROPHET Ezekiel tells how, in the year 592 BC, in a mystic vision he saw the iniquity of the Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem. In particular, he relates how he was brought to 'the north gate of the house of the Lord; and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz' (8.14). The prophet thus, unintentionally, witnesses to the widespread influence of the cult of the Mesopotamian god Tammuz and to a notable feature of that cult. The Jewish women were performing a ritual lamentation for the death of Tammuz, which was annually mourned at the summer solstice when the year begins to wane and vegetation has withered under the sun's heat. The mourners chanted in their lament:

> How long will the springing up of verdure be withheld?
> How long will vegetation be withheld?

The Hebrew name 'Tammuz' derived from the Sumerian 'Dumuzi', which was both the name of an ancient Sumerian deity and of the month in which he was specially commemorated. In the Jewish calendar there is also a month 'Tammuz', as there is with the Arabs under the name 'Tamuz'. The god was known, too, by the title *Adoni*, 'my Lord', which passed into Greek and Latin as Adonis (see APHRODITE). Although this ancient deity was so widely known and abundant reference is made to him in Mesopotamian texts, our modern knowledge of him is pieced together from a variety of material, most of it fragmentary.

The Sumerians, who originally conceived of this deity, called him 'Dumu-zi-abzu', meaning 'True son of Apsu'. The Apsu was the personification of the sweet waters, as opposed to Tiamat, the personification of the salt waters or sea (see CREATION MYTHS). Since it was the sweet waters (as rivers or rain) which fertilized the earth, Dumuzi's filial relationship to the Apsu doubtless indicates some original connection with fertility. There is indeed evidence of this aspect of his nature; however, in Sumerian mythology the god appears in various guises. Thus, in one myth concerned to exalt agriculture over a pastoral economy, Dumuzi is a shepherd god, who competes unsuccessfully with Enkimdu, the farmer god, for Inanna, the fertility goddess.

Dumuzi's connection with Inanna ('Ishtar' in Akkadian; see ISHTAR; MESOPOTAMIA) constitutes the most celebrated feature of his mythology, but the evidence about it is curiously ambivalent. Although represented in the previous myth as the rejected suitor of the goddess, in another myth he appears as her husband; but the relation had direful consequences for him. For Inanna became desirous of ruling in the underworld as she did in the world above. Consequently she descended to the realm of Ereshkigal, the Sumerian goddess of the dead, to challenge her sovereignty. But Ereshkigal was too strong for her, and Inanna was held prisoner in the 'Land of No Return'. Eventually the god Enki secured her release and return to the upper world, but on condition that she found a substitute to take her place. To save herself, Inanna delivered Dumuzi to the demons who accompanied her, as the required substitute, and Dumuzi was carried off to the grim domain of Ereshkigal.

Sacred Prostitutes

In the famous *Epic of Gilgamesh* (see GILGAMESH), curious reference is made to Ishtar's responsibility for the fate of Dumuzi. In repelling the amorous advances of the goddess, the hero Gilgamesh includes Dumuzi among the list of her victims; but he adds 'To the god Dumuzi, the lover of thy youth, thou hast ordained lamentation year by year'. This cryptic statement doubtless refers to some aspect of the myth which found expression in an annual ritual lamentation for Dumuzi, in which Ishtar was involved. Further information, though still of a cryptic nature, is provided in the later Akkadian version of the myth of Ishtar's descent into the underworld. In this version there is no mention of Dumuzi's being a substitute for Ishtar. However, at the end of the narrative, after the account of Ishtar's return from the 'Land of No Return', reference is suddenly made to Tammuz (Dumuzi): 'Tammuz, her young husband, wash with pure water; anoint him with goodly oil; clothe him with a resplendent robe; let him play on the flute of lapis lazuli; let the courtesans appease his wrath! . . . On the day when Tammuz comes up to me, and the lapis lazuli flute with him, and the carnelian ring, come up to me. When those who lament, men and women, come up with him to me. May the dead arise and smell the incense.'

These invocations or injunctions clearly relate to an elaborate ritual drama in which the death and resurrection of Tammuz were portrayed. The 'courtesans' were undoubtedly the sacred prostitutes who served in the temples of Ishtar. However, it is difficult, in turn, to relate the myth of Ishtar's descent into the underworld to these rubrics concerning Tammuz. The obvious explanation that Ishtar descended there to rescue the dead Tammuz is not actually supported by the Akkadian text; and it is certainly contradicted by the Sumerian version. However, the Akkadian text does imply a ritual connection of some kind.

The general bearing of the extant evidence indicates that, whatever may have been his original Sumerian form, in Mesopotamia later, and in other adjacent lands, Tammuz was the central figure of a death and resurrection ritual which was related to the annual cycle of vegetation, and in which the fertility goddess Ishtar was intimately implicated (see VEGETATION SPIRITS; DYING GOD).

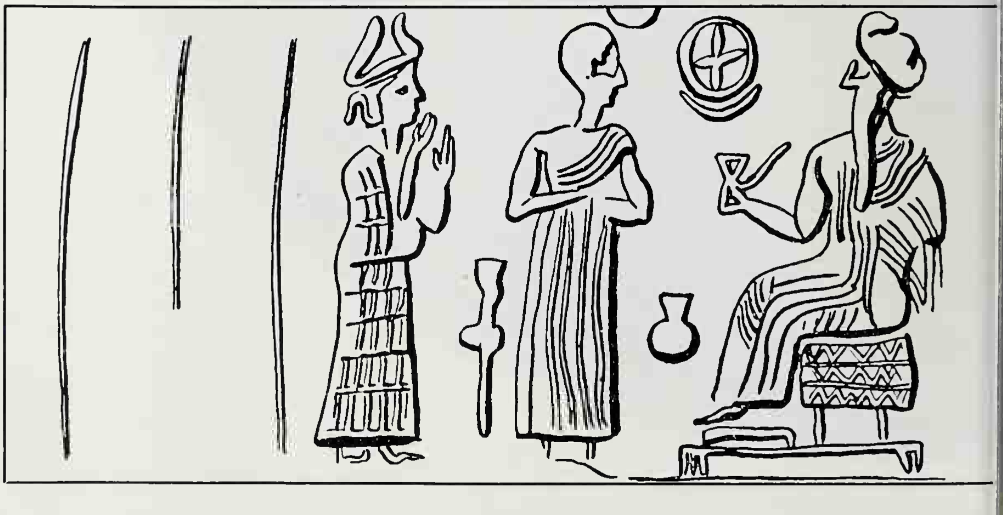
As a 'dying-rising god', Tammuz naturally suggests comparison with similar types of deity, and above all with Osiris of Egypt (see OSIRIS). Such phenomenological similarity makes it reasonable to ask whether Tammuz also played the role of the saviour god in Mesopotamian religion which Osiris so notably did in the religion of Egypt. The answer is that Tammuz did so, but in a different way, and the reason for the difference is interesting and important.

The religion of the ancient Mesopotamian peoples was based upon an evaluation of human nature that precluded any hope of a happy afterlife. Death irreparably shattered the constitution of the individual person, and what survived (the *etimmu*) descended to the grim Land of No Return. Hence, Tammuz could never assume that role in a mortuary ritual which Osiris had in Egypt, whereby the dead participated in the resurrection of the divine hero. However, ritual texts do exist in which salvation was sought through Tammuz; but the salvation was from sickness, not from death.

An attempt has been made to show that there existed in Sumer a myth and ritual pattern in which a divine king represented Tammuz. This pattern involved the sacred marriage of the king and the chief priestess of Inanna, and the death and resurrection of the king. The purpose of the rites was to ensure the fertility of men, flocks and land. The theory has not, however, found general acceptance among scholars.

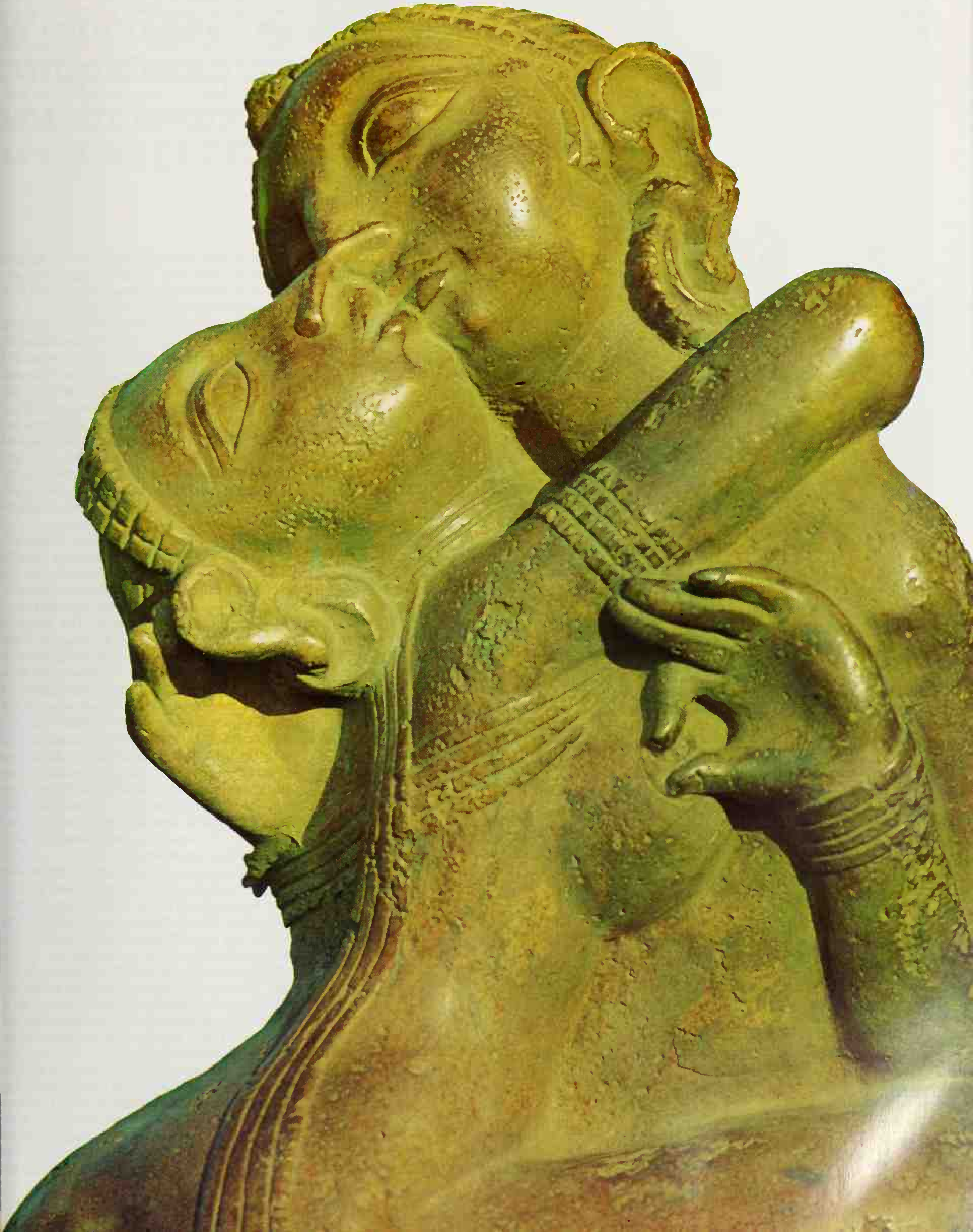
S. G. F. BRANDON

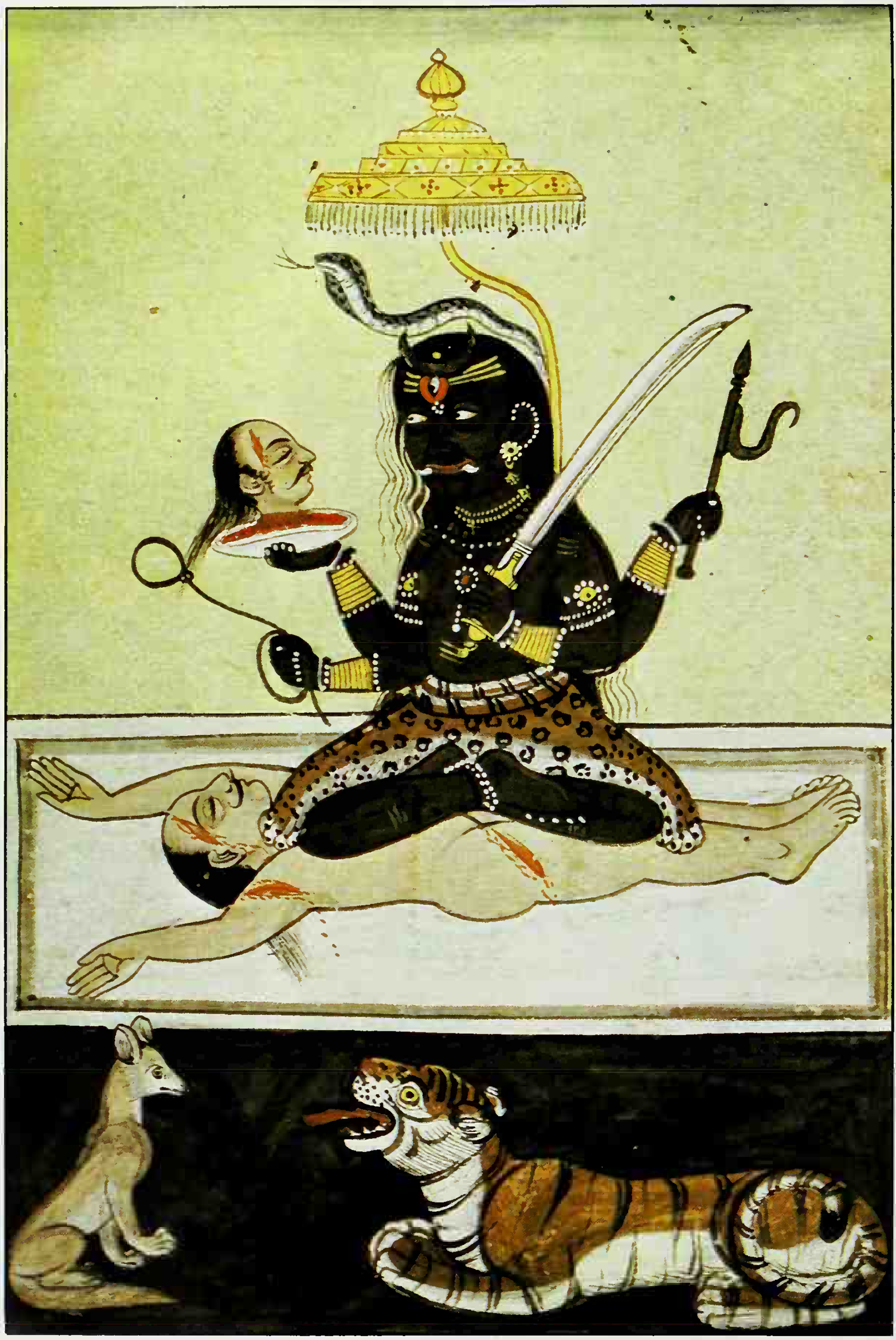
FURTHER READING: S. N. Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology* (Harper, N.Y., 1961); H. W. F. Saggs, *The Greatness That Was Babylon* (Sidgwick & Jackson, 1962).



Sumerian seal showing the mother goddess, a worshipper and Dumuzi, or Tammuz: in the 6th century BC the prophet Ezekiel described how the women of Jerusalem lamented the god's death

TANTRISM





Sven Gahlin

In tantric philosophy the interplay of two basic forces, Shiva and Shakti, male and female, underlies the entire universe: the female principle is the dominant one and the male the subordinate, for 'Shiva without Shakti is a corpse'

Previous page **Copies of statues from the temple of Konarak, c 1000 AD, showing the male and female principles embraced**

Left **and** ***right*** **18th century pictures of Kali, a personification of the elements of terror and dread in Shakti, dancing on and dominating her male partner, Shiva**

Believing that the generative organs are instruments of a supreme magical operation, the tantrics seek salvation through sex, but in their highly disciplined rites sensual pleasure is incidental

UNTIL THE END of the last century comparatively little was known in Europe about Tantrism, although it is one of the most extraordinary cults of the East. Today in one form or another it plays an essential role in certain occult societies, both in Europe and America. It is in a sexual context that this philosophy is usually considered because its treatment of sex is so remarkable, but Tantrism touches on a great deal more than sexual matters.

The name comes from *Tantra*, a general term used for the texts in which this system is expounded, as a rule in the course of a dialogue between the Hindu god Shiva and his consort Shakti (see SHIVA). Tantrism is practised with local variations in India, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, and before the Chinese occupation it formed part of certain lamaist sects of Tibet. Its philosophy is as complex as any that can be found in the orthodox religions of these countries, and some of it reaches heights of subtlety and finesse to match anything in the more traditional theologies. But there are critics who maintain that it bears the same relationship to orthodox Hinduism and Buddhism that the Black Mass bears to Christianity. Though an outgrowth of Hinduism it is opposed to the *Vedas*, the sacred writings that are the fountainhead of all Hindu orthodoxy; and the Buddhist frowns upon most of its teachings and practices, which to the puritan border on the scandalous.

Tantrics, the followers of Tantrism, claim that theirs is perhaps the oldest religion in India. Yoga (see YOGA), now regarded as one of the six orthodox systems of Aryan Hindu philosophy, is in their view basically tantric. A figure in a typical squatting posture, and a priest gazing at the tip of his nose, which both suggest yogic breathing and meditative techniques, have been found impressed in seals of the Indus Valley civilization (c 2000 BC), which preceded the arrival of the Aryans in India by more than 1000 years.

This priority can, of course, be disputed, but the tantrics' claim to uniqueness admits of little doubt. Theirs is a special cult; its teachings confer personal and social emancipation; it liberates the follower from the bondage of all moral restraints. The tantrics regard themselves as the elect, and all those outside the sect as *pashu*, or the animal herd.

Most tantric writings are traceable to a period after the 10th century AD. Many of the earlier manuscripts were destroyed by Hindu zealots, and the bulk of the remainder by a succession of invaders who conquered India, and to whom the doctrines appeared unworthy of perpetuation or remembrance. The monasteries where they were taught were razed to the ground, the libraries burned, and the monks slain. The nucleus of the teaching was thereafter preserved with great secrecy.

According to tantric philosophy the whole universe is built up of and pervaded by two basic forces which are in intimate and intricate union. These forces, named Shiva and Shakti, are personified as male and female deities. Of this divine pair, Shiva is the subordinate one, for it is the Female Principle that ultimately underlies all manifestation, and everything, including Shiva himself, is contained within the Female Principle. There is a tantric saying, 'Shiva without Shakti is a corpse.'

So important is the Shakti concept in this philosophy that Tantrism is often known by the alternative title of Shaktism, the Tantras spoken of as the Shakta writings, and tantric cults often called the Shakta cults. Among the various reasons advanced by tantrics as the basis for their claim to

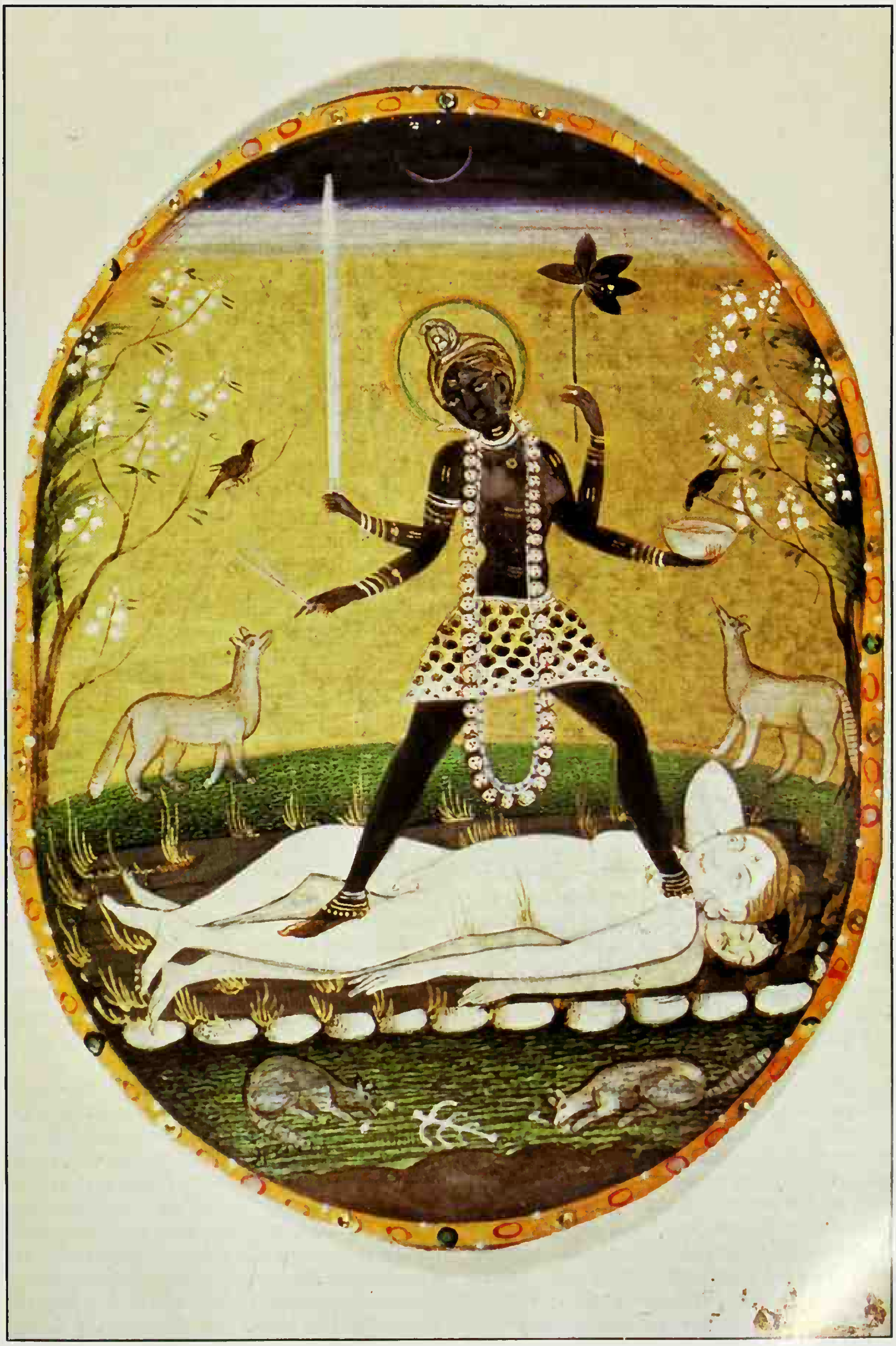
Women are treated on terms of complete equality with men, and in many of the rites are assigned superior status

uperiority over orthodox Hinduism is the igh place assigned to women. The latter re treated on terms of complete equality with men, and in many of their rites are ssigned an even superior status, as living mbodiments of Shakti, the mother goddess.

The main subjects dealt with in the Tantras include the creation of the world, nd its final dissolution; the various gods nd goddesses and the worship appropriate o their status and powers; physical culture; mental and spiritual discipline; and the ites by which magical powers can be cquired to enable one to control oneself, ontrol others, the forces of Nature, and, on he highest plane, even the gods themselves. This emphasis on magic has brought Tanrism into further disrepute, and the term tantric’ retains its overtones of black magic n India to this day.

Indeed, there is hardly an occult procedure that is not dealt with in Tantrism. Some of its rituals are reminiscent of the orms of ceremonial magic described in the Western grimoires. Candles, incense, bells, magical wands, spells, magic circles, bodily postures, occult gestures, symbolical designs, words of power, are as much part f the tantric's paraphernalia as of the Western magician's. Much of the ritualism has in fact been embodied into their own raditions by Western magicians who have been largely influenced, especially in rites of ex mysticism and sex magic, by what they have found in tantric manuals or learned rom tantric teachers.

Long periods of preparation and training n techniques of highly specialized physical culture are a pre-requisite to tantric progress. In particular, great emphasis is laid on *pranayama* or respiratory exercises (see BREATH); on heliotherapy or invigorating the body by adoration of the sun and exposure of the body to the sun; on the control of certain autonomic functions, that s, of those physiological processes not under he direction of the conscious mind, such as body temperature, pulse rates, and the reflexes that trigger ejaculation; on methods of superconcentration that bring all bodily functions under the control of the will; and on very subtle processes of internal alchemy. Certain exercises are motionless stances with the limbs fixed in prescribed symbolic attitudes during which the internal exercises are carried out. Running parallel with these



Sven Gahlin

‘Acts that cause the moral degradation of the ordinary man, by those very acts does the wise one obtain salvation’

practices is the intonation of holy *mantras* or spells of a special abbreviated kind. Like the physical exercises, the voicing of such mantras is first minimized, and then carried on interiorly (see MANTRA).

Rousing the Sleeping Snake

The alchemy expounded in the tantric texts, like its counterpart in the writings of the Western alchemists, is replete with esoteric passages and little can be made of their jargon. The secret door will not open to the uninitiated without a key. In tantric writings a curious symbolism underlies the outward meaning, much of it couched in metaphorical language or expressed as though an actual laboratory experiment were being described.

Though ostensibly concerned with the transmutation of baser metals into gold, and with the vessels, implements and apparatus of commerce and the ritual movements of the alchemist in his workroom, this alchemy actually takes place within the body itself. It is a hermetic distillation, as it were, from the bodily fluids, with the aid of instruments and utensils provided by the body itself, of the gross substance within oneself, into the subtle quintessence that can reinvigorate the physical frame, make the body glow, activate one’s supernatural faculties and put one in communication with any entity in the universe. All the processes as described are carefully concealed parallels of physiological processes by which the internal ingredients manufactured within the body are heated to an even heat by the bodily fires, and rising upwards through various stages are distilled in the brain to produce the alchemical liquor of transcendence – the celestial dew of the hermetic philosophers of the Western tradition (see ALCHEMY).

This naturally presupposes a complex system of subtle anatomy and physiology, by which the invisible transmutation is effected, and such indeed is the case. It is based on the *chakras* or plexuses of the etheric body, situated along an axis that passes from tail-bone to skull (see KUNDALINI). They are seven in number, like lotuses of variegated colour, located roughly at the base of the spine (the basal chakra), the sex organs, the solar plexus, the heart, the throat, between the eyebrows, and at the crown of the head (the *sahasrara*). There is a connection between the base and crown chakras, between the abode of Shakti and Shiva. In some texts the head is compared to an inverted bowl and the pelvis to a basin, the two being joined by a hollow tube. All power is promised to him who can siphon the lower energy towards the upper, but in the ordinary man this is an almost impossible task for the tube is blocked at the stages marked by the chakras, each of which has a formidable gate that will never open to anyone without the password.

The basal chakra is inhabited by the mysterious *kundalini*, which is likened to a tiny snake, normally lying curled and asleep near the tail-bone. Its arousal is the goal of an elaborate technique taking many years to master and requiring the personal guidance of a guru. When aroused, the serpent begins its upward ascent, piercing the gates of the chakras one by one until it reaches the summit.

Sometimes the chakras are compared to focuses of occult fire, lying dormant. There is an ember flickering in the kundalini which is the incendiary point, but normally quiescent. A sympathetic resonance exists between the chakras. By tantric method the kundalini can be made to blaze up and when the blaze reaches the chakra next above it, ignites it and in this manner the stream of flame going from chakra to chakra reaches the crown, the sahasrara.

The dangers of this discipline can be very real for unless one has been trained to deal with this fire-force it can leave madness or even death in its trail. But words fail in attempting to describe the climax of the operation if it is successful. For then Shakti and Shiva are united and their ecstasy is known with a hundred variations under countless names. It is the Great Awakening, the Immortal Draught, the Supreme Bliss.

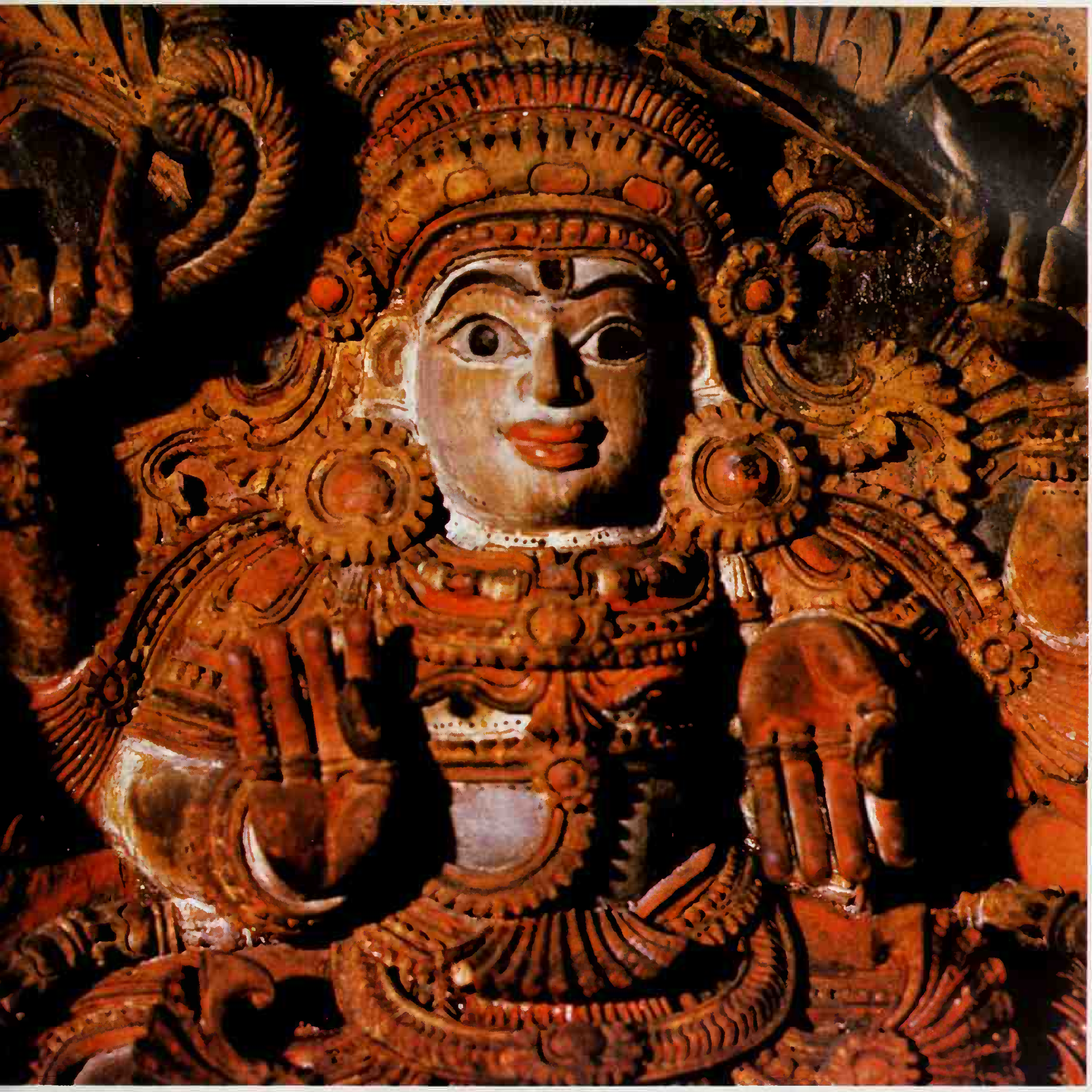
Transcending Good and Evil

Besides personal disciplines there are a number of rites which are regarded as essential to the tantric’s progress. They include nudism, sexual freedom, group sexuality, adultery, incest and, in the higher planes, intercourse with elemental creatures, female demons and goddesses. Tantrism has therefore been condemned as representing the worst side of religion and a travesty of Hinduism and Buddhism. But its advocates defend it as a noble and inspiring philosophy, condemned and vilified only by misrepresentation and prejudice.

Early 19th century figure of Parvati, the consort of Shiva and another aspect of Shakti, the female principle of Tantrism: the tantric scriptures contain dialogues between Shiva and Parvati in which the doctrines of Tantrism are expounded

Since the law and the social code are opposed to the doctrines, tantrics feel that attempts cannot be made early enough to wean the initiate from traditional standards of morality and set forth the virtues of the tantric code. Sex may be impure if treated solely as an animal function, on an equal footing with the other animal functions performed by man. But even on grounds of its naturalness alone it should be free from any unpleasant overtones, and no more subject to moral stricture than drawing breath. Part of the discipline therefore consists in a gradual psychological indoctrination that inures the disciple to the new outlook and conditions him by precept and practice to the tantric view. The mind must be jolted into a new way of thinking, and this is achieved by deliberate antinomianism, or working against the law and acting against the dictates of morality and conscience. Just as two lovers, ravished by their passion, care not whether their love is moral or permissible but only that they should continue in their loving, and in this manner override society and its laws and the conventional standards of right and wrong, even so must the mind of the tantric, absorbed in the sublimity of the tantric doctrine, transcend the ideas of good and evil and move to a higher level of morality to a condition beyond the jurisdiction of family, society and state.

Human existence in the so-called civilized environment is cluttered with convention, artificiality and superfluity. Lessening the load is therefore a pre-requisite to success along the tantric path. But no half-hearted or apologetic contravention of the dictates of society is worth the effort: what is needed is a complete and total denial of their validity. The Tantras repeatedly preach the need for going against the established order of things so that the will might be strengthened, the new way of life properly understood, and accepted in its true sense.



William MacQuitty

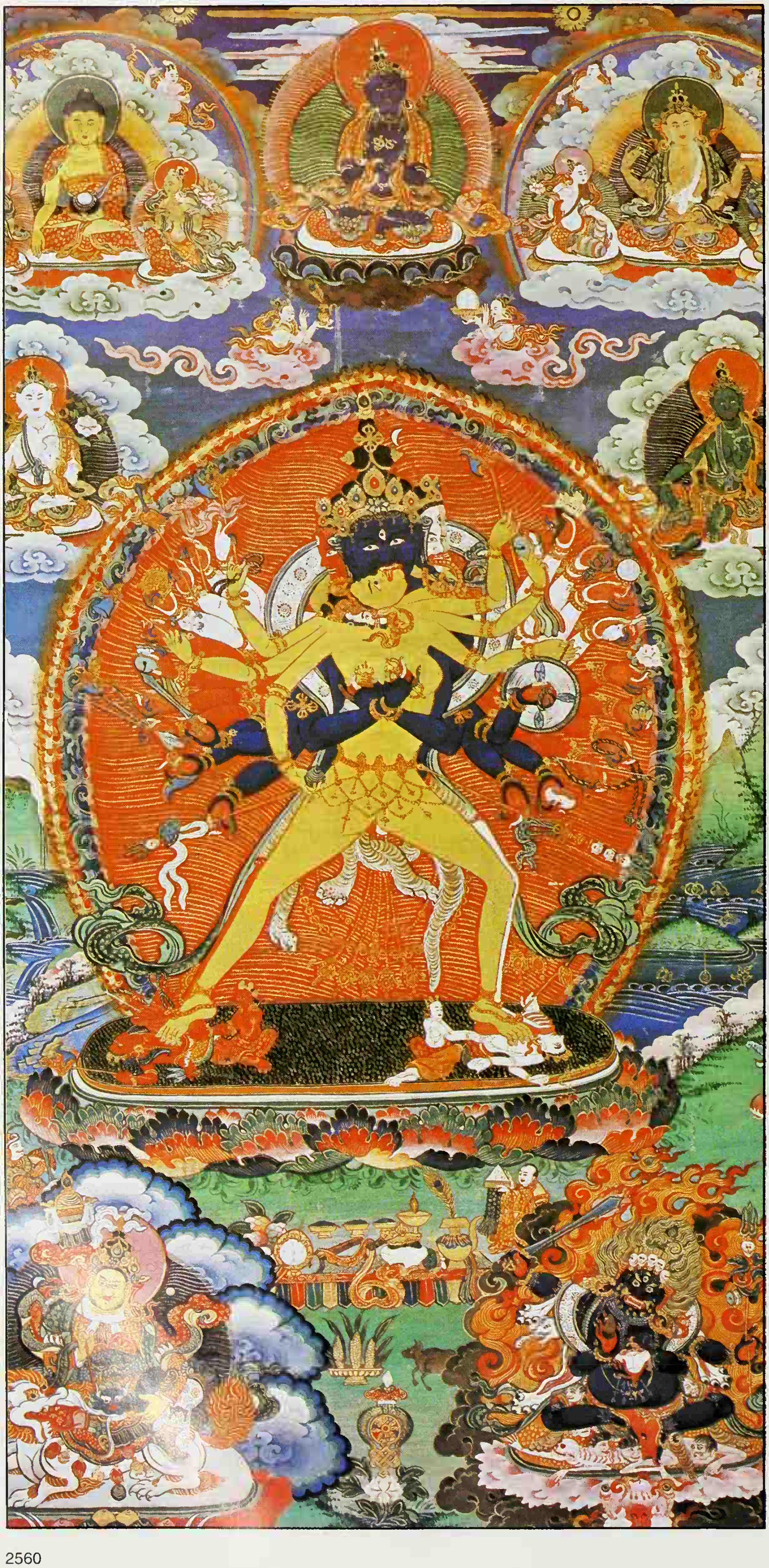
'Acts that cause the moral degradation of the ordinary man, by those very acts does the wise one obtain salvation', runs a typical tantric text. Another says, 'Just as a thorn in the foot can be removed by another thorn, and poison neutralized by poison, so can sin purge sin.' 'Actions that cause a man to burn in hell, are those by which the yogi attains beatitude.' And to sum up: 'Perfection is gained by satisfying all one's desires'. This is the idealization of Self, for within the self dwells Shakti. What you desire, that do, for this gratifies the goddess.

Organized society, religion, law, are all inimical to the doctrine of spontaneity. What is natural is right. The mind must be emptied of all its familiar preconceptions and prejudices or the tantric doctrine will be resisted. What is natural must be freely enjoyed. There can be no sin in spontaneity, for Nature cannot be transgressed. Eating and drinking, breathing, sleeping, sexual intercourse, there is no 'moral' difference between them.

Salvation through Sex

In the higher reaches of this line of thought the idea of good and evil is altogether abandoned as a purely artificial distinction. And down the line the whole set of conflicting opposites is similarly thrown overboard. There is no difference between rich and poor, between prince and pauper. In fact social stratification is non-existent among tantrics, and the only hierarchy is one of cultic eminence. Still more carefully must one try to grasp the idea that there is also no difference between wisdom and folly, industry and idleness, food and offal. And among some tantrics offal is actually eaten, as part of a ritual to symbolize the rejection of all traditional values imposed by habit and convention and acquired taste.

One rite commonly celebrated in many tantric sects is known as the *chakra-puja* or circle worship, where the participants sit in a circle, which implies complete mutual equality among those present. Male and female participants sit next to each other on the floor, and in the middle of the circle sit another couple, who represent Shakti and Shiva. Sometimes a nude girl occupies the central place as Shakti, or else a drawing of the yoni (female genitals) may be made



Victoria and Albert Museum

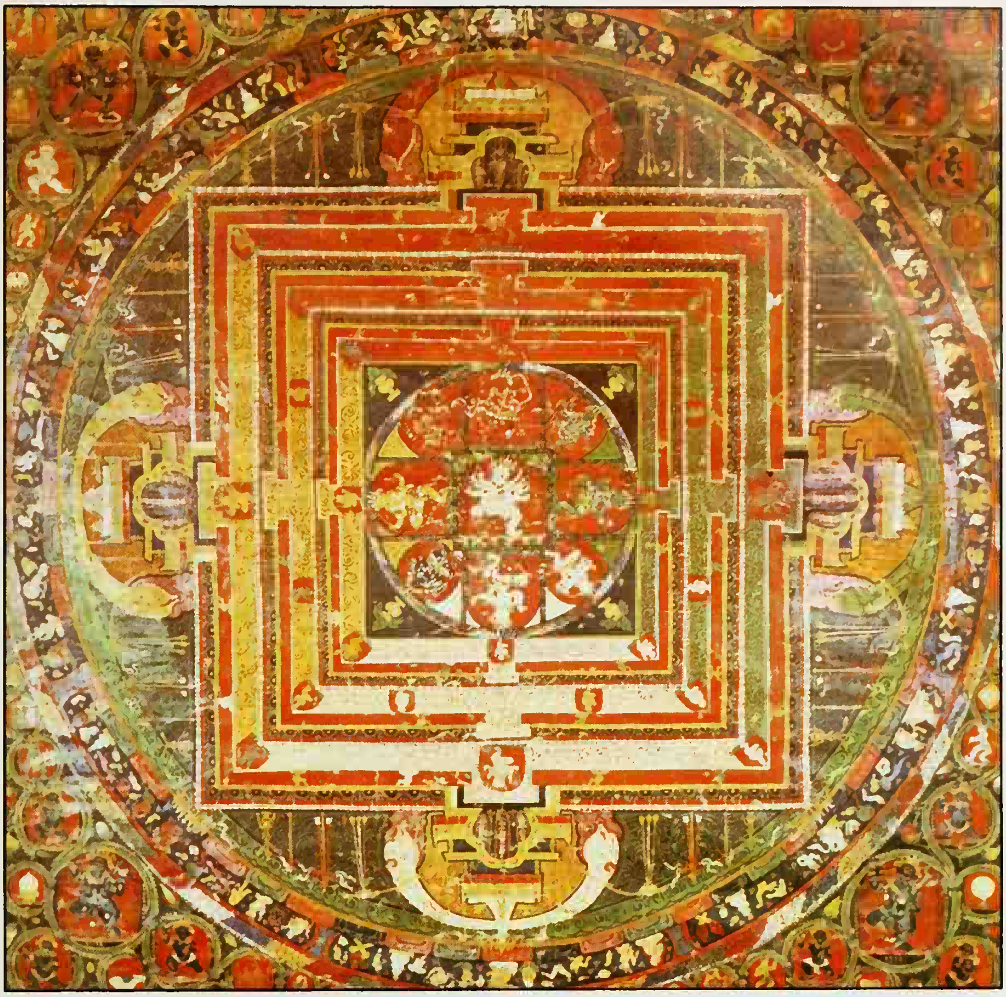
The terrifying aspects of Shiva and Shakti are the subject of tantric meditation in graveyards during rites of contact with corpses

Left **Lamaist temple banner from Tibet, 18th century, showing the goddess of terror surrounded by deities and demons**

Right **Mandala of Shiva in his awe-inspiring aspect as Bhairava (from *bhairav*, 'terror'): Bhairava was said to have been born from a drop of Shiva's blood and became the personification of his rage and hatred**

on the floor, this symbol being taken to signify the presence of the goddess. Then all the members partake of a ceremonial meal consisting of wine, flesh, fish, and bread, followed by a rite of sexual intercourse. These five items have been the subject of much philosophical speculation; they are said to represent certain fundamental categories and are equated either with the elements or with the interior faculties of the body. The wine symbolizes fire and the subtle draught of immortality that the tantric must learn to distil and drink; the flesh symbolizes air and the bodily functions that must be brought under control; fish stands for water and the techniques of sexual occultism; the bread is the earth, or the natural environment which must be understood and controlled. *Maithuna* or sexual intercourse symbolizes ether, the quintessence of all the elements, and is the final goal of all tantric endeavour, for through it one apprehends the ultimate reality. In this context the esoteric meaning of maithuna must be clearly understood. The sex act in its normal, gross form may occasionally bring a fleeting revelation of eternal truth, but that would be rare, for the smoke of passion clouds the mind. Sex as a sacred ritual, unclouded by passion can, on the other hand, help one to apprehend the ultimate Unity. The genuine rite can reveal Being, expand consciousness, confer bliss. The way through *bhukti* (pleasure) can lead one to *mukti* (redemption). Sex, in other words, can be a way of salvation. And this profoundly mystical belief is the tantric secret.

The gods have ordained that the evolution and purification of man's soul can only be achieved by living in an earthly incarnation and experiencing life on the physical plane. So it is the destiny of the initiate to utilize the sex organs for the purpose of discovering the ultimate principles of the universe. Union of male and female brings about the union of man and God. In the religious art of many Indian sects the procreative organs are stylized in the form of the lingam (phallus) and yoni. The lingam being the symbol of transcendent life is regarded as worthy of adoration, and anointed, garlanded and given homage. The yoni, symbolizing regeneration, is drawn on the ground in the form of mandalas (see MANDALA), often in composite designs of



Sven Gahlin

three or nine yonis; sometimes little vessels representing the lingam and yoni in union are used as lamps to keep the symbol of the divine encounter ever before the eyes of the worshipper.

Woman, the Opposite

The human organs that perform the divine rite of maithuna receive veneration for special reasons. In tantric theory the seat of pleasure during the sex act resides not in the active members but in the heart, so the members do not need to be venerated for the pleasure they are erroneously thought to give. The apparent purpose of food is the satisfaction of one's appetite, whereas only after the food has passed from plate to palate and the taste buds have been satisfied, does the actual process of nourishment take place. Only the pashu, or animal, thinks of sex in terms of pleasure or procreation. The gross product of the sex apparatus results in children, but such procreation is not a human prerogative. All animals procreate; in tantric belief they derive greater pleasure from the act than men; they produce more abundantly, and procreation is therefore rightly for the pashu. The human sex organs are instruments of a supreme magical operation of which no animal can possibly be aware. They help the participant of the sex rite to transcend the physical, to transcend the mental, and rise to a psychic and spiritual state. Sex, like every other blessing can be debased and become a mere lustful interlude in which the worst elements of human animality are given full play, and the erotic components of smell, sight, touch, taste and hearing are directed towards a purely sensual gratification. But to the tantric pleasure plays only an incidental part in the process.

Woman provides an element that nothing else can give a man, for she represents the Opposite, the contrasting and vitalizing component that brings the vision of the goddess. Again, only the pashu thinks of the female in terms of intercourse with her. There is no room in Tantrism for the man who seeks out women for their beauty, youth, status, wealth, pleasure or progeny. The unique quality about a woman is her sex, and it is imperative that one's motivation should be moved from all considerations of personal desire to the pure fact of experiencing sexual union.

The further a woman is removed from all deceptive allures the better, for then the power of the female can be brought into operation in a pure unadulterated state, transcending all considerations at the physiological or social level. To the adept it makes no difference whether his sexual partner is a Draupadi (a voluptuous heroine of the *Mahabharata*) or a dombi (a low-caste untouchable woman). Beauty is a snare and an impediment, and in order to avoid its attraction it is necessary to overcome the obstacles of conventional revulsion. To avoid all possibility of desire entering into the rite, the true adept often insists that his partner be an old or ugly woman.

In the tantric circle worship it therefore becomes important that no claim should be made on any partner, and that no personal preferences should be allowed to decide the selection. Various means are used to ensure that the partners should pair not by choice but by chance. One method is for each woman on entering the sanctuary to deposit her bodice in a box, and at the end of the preparatory ceremonies for each man to pick one and take as his partner for the occasion the woman to whom it belongs, be that woman his wife, another's wife, his daughter, sister or even mother. This last requirement is explained away by some tantrics as symbolizing certain other mysteries.

Each stage of the tantric exercise demands some form of personal discipline. The asceticism of the unenlightened person involves resisting, conquering and killing physical desire. This latter does not dam the turbulent stream of sex, but only muddies it. The tantric practises *tapas*, which means both 'heat' and 'asceticism', and in tapas sexual desire is not obliterated but vitalized and used. It is a means whereby sexual energy is brought to a controlled intensity and then re-absorbed into the system. In one curious rite the tantric undertakes to serve the female like a domestic, for three months. He sleeps in the same room with her, but on the floor, while she sleeps on the bed. Later he sleeps in the same bed, but at her feet; then beside her, but clothed; then they lie together nude in each other's arms. But at no time during this cycle of 'closed intercourse' does he have sex with her. He builds up an inner tension, deliberately controlled by long self-discipline and complex yogic techniques so that his system becomes a reservoir of power and he is ready for the very difficult sex procedures that follow. One tantric text says, 'The man who knows the fiery form of Shiva procreates himself anew at every intercourse. His body glows, his mind is crystal clear, his spirit in harmony with heaven'.

(See also BUDDHISM; SEX.)

BENJAMIN WALKER

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Typical of the many paradoxes contained in this ancient philosophy is the fact that 'Tao' means the 'Way', yet it does not prescribe a particular path; Tao is simply 'the uncomplicated essence of what is right'

TAOISM

ONE OF THE THREE great religions of China, Taoism, like the other two, Confucianism and Buddhism, has a traditional founder. He is Lao Tze, born in 604 BC in a hamlet in Honan province. During his long life he held a number of public offices and was for a time the curator of the royal library in Loyang. Confucius, more than half a century his junior, visited him and was overawed by his presence and his phenomenal learning. After the interview Confucius told his disciples, 'I understand how birds move through the skies, how fish swim in water, how animals run over the hills. Things that fly can be snared; things that swim can be caught in nets; things that run can be trapped. But what can one do with a dragon that soars into the heavens, trampling on the clouds and riding the storms!'

At an advanced age Lao Tze retired from government service and travelled westward on buffalo-back to the borders of the barbarian lands somewhere in the region of the Gobi Desert. At the boundary warden's earnest plea for a record of his teachings, the sage paused long enough to inscribe a mere 5000 characters on bamboo parchment. Leaving this with the official he resumed his journey to an unknown destination, and was seen no more.

This small book, the *Tao Te Ching*, is one of the world's great religious classics; zealous Taoists claim that it enshrines the wisdom of the universe. As a result of speculation and commentary on its verses a vast library of Taoist scriptures grew around it. By the 1st century AD it comprised about 60 volumes; by the 7th century the number had increased to 4500. By that time, too, Lao Tze was worshipped as a god; temples were raised in his honour, and his original slender masterpiece was engraved on stone at the capital of every Chinese state.

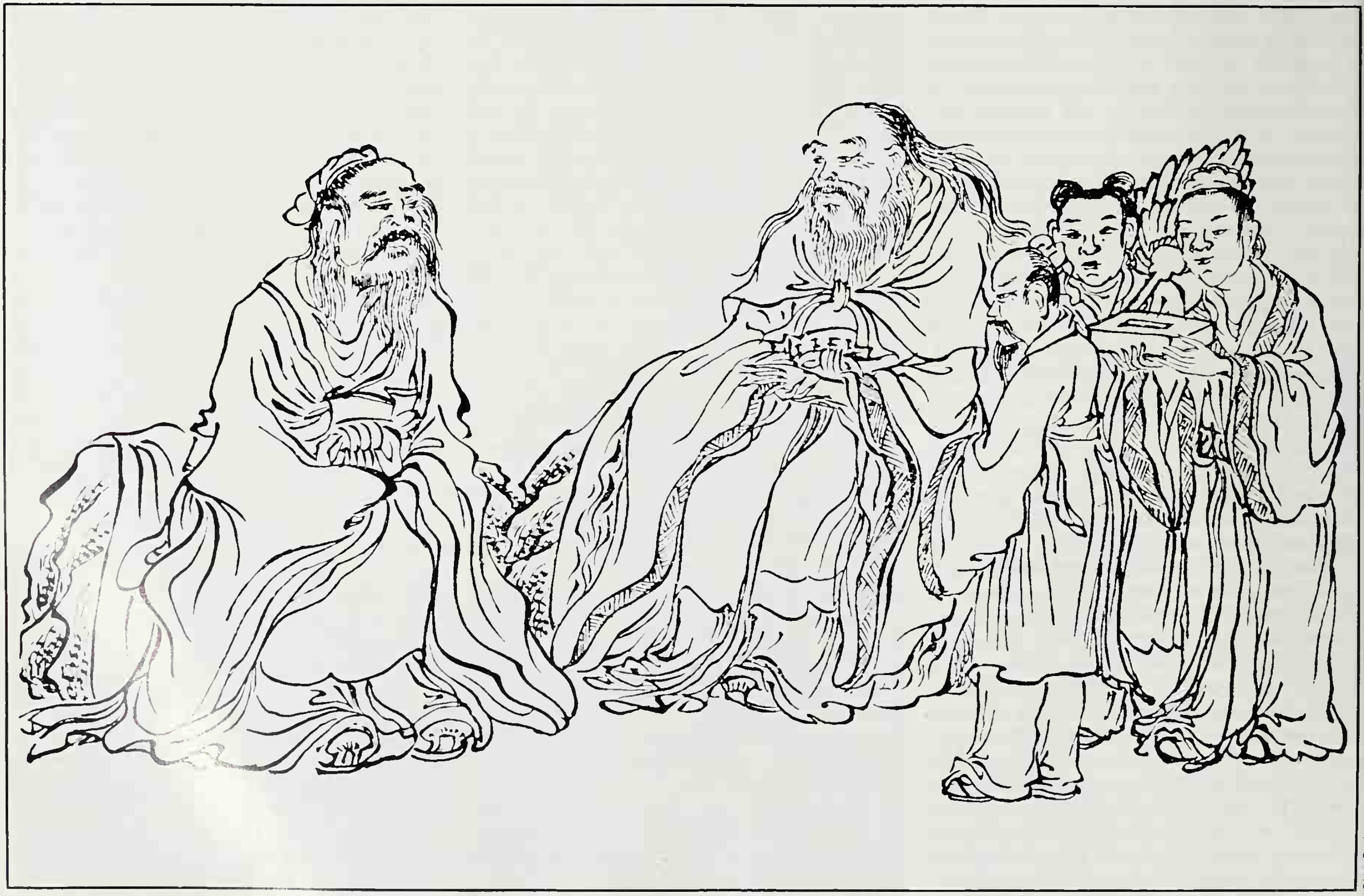
The teachings of the *Tao Te Ching* are amongst the strangest ever propounded. They are paradoxical, inverse, passive, irrational. Although the term Tao means course or way, Taoism does not point to any particular way and there is no fixed track to be followed. Tao has reality but no form. Like the deep and obscure highways of the sea the waters close behind the moving ship and leave no trace of its passing. Little can be taught: 'The Tao that can be put into words is not the eternal Tao.' It opposes complexity, sophistication, 'cleverness', for these corrupt both mind and spirit.

This idea is well expressed in a famous Chinese story about the clever young fellow who saw a peasant watering his fields by the tedious process of carrying one pitcher at a time from the well, and told him about a mechanical contrivance that would enable him to get his water straight from well to furrow in a fraction of the time. 'I know of the contrivance,' said the old one, 'but I also know that those who use cunning contrivances soon begin to practise cunning ways. Practising cunning ways their hearts become cunning. Those with cunning hearts are incapable of being pure in their thoughts. Those with corrupted thoughts have restless and disturbed spirits. And those who are troubled in spirit are not fit vehicles for the Tao.'

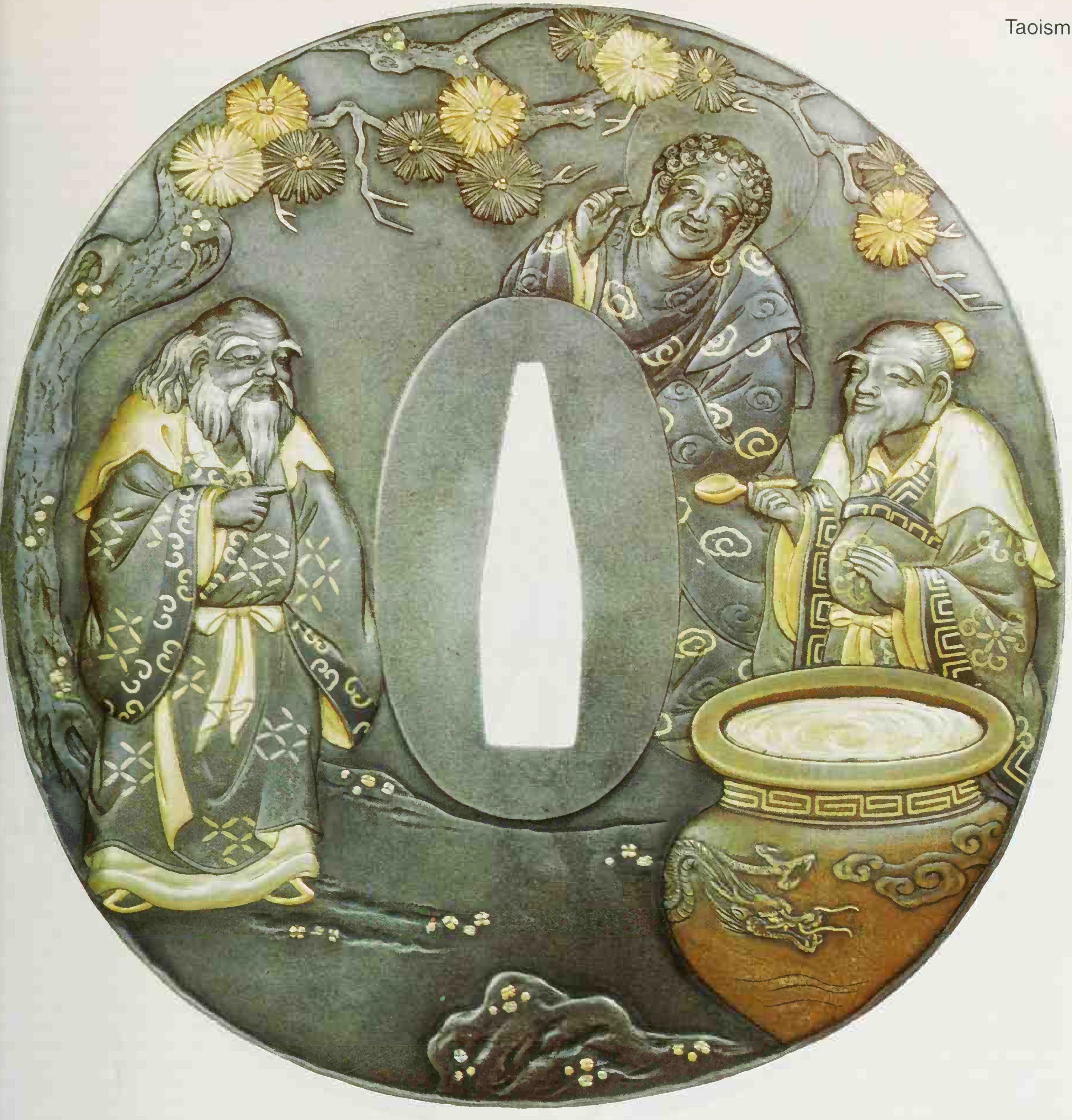
Yielding Is Life

Tao is the uncomplicated essence of what is right. It overflows into everything that is in harmony with it. It is easy, but people still prefer the difficult and intricate little paths, straining to get 'there', when the way 'there' is best found by not making 'there' your goal. Ambition, fretful desire, thirst for fame, striving to be first, are the real hindrances along the way. Take long strides and your progress is unsure. On tiptoe you are unsteady. Grab and it eludes you. Action and achievement are limitations. The Tao has no shape but like an uncarved block of wood it holds within itself an infinity of shapes. Give it shape and it

The three great religions of China are Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism: the founder of Taoism was Lao Tze, and Confucius, who visited him, was overawed by his presence and his learning *Below* The meeting of Confucius and Lao Tze *Right* Lao Tze, Buddha and Confucius, shown tasting saké on a 19th century Japanese sword guard



Chris Barker



Sotheby's/Michael Holford

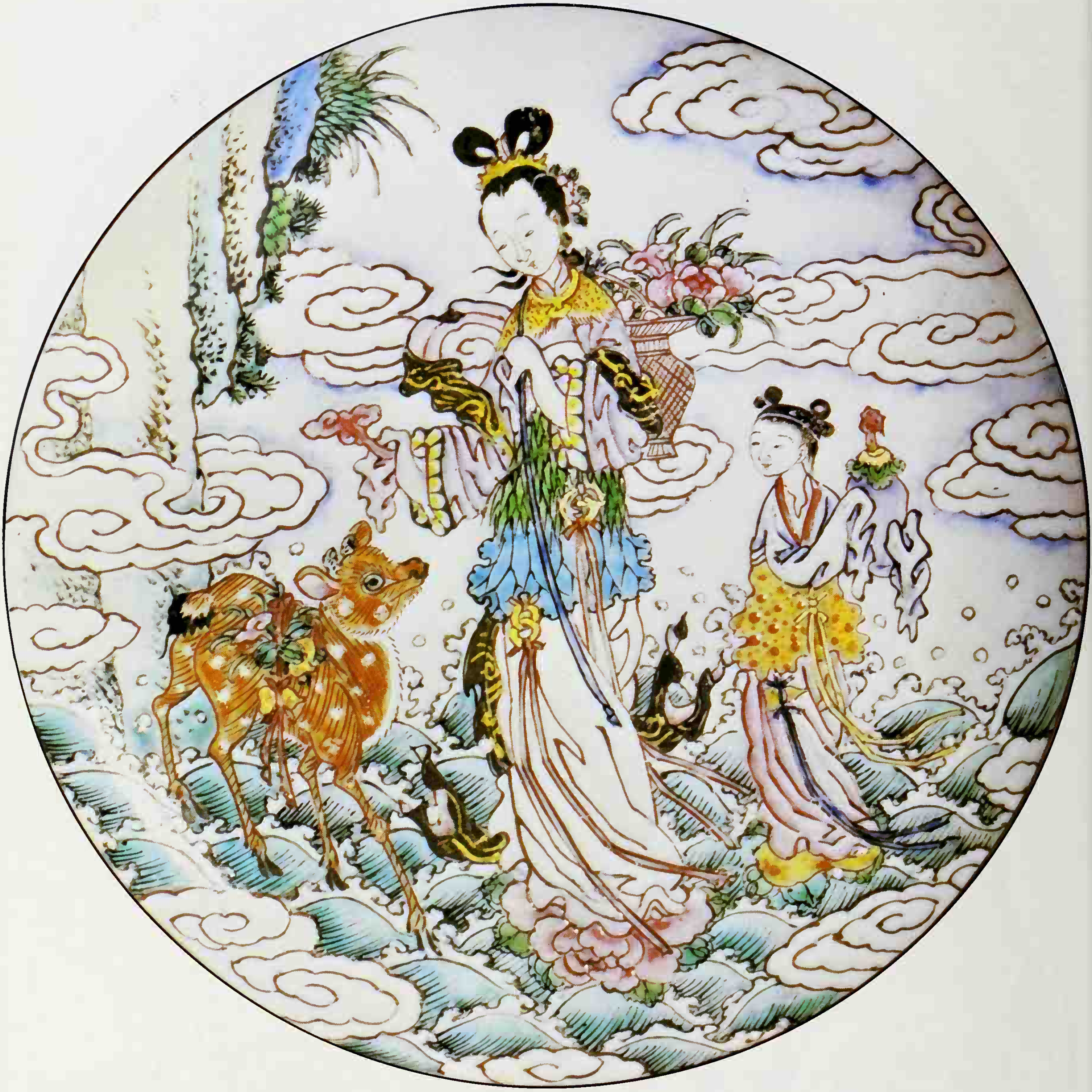
becomes fulfilled, formalized and limited.

The simple is better than the sophisticated. In the words of the *Tao Te Ching*: 'Relish unflavoured things'. Staying at home is better than wandering: 'The Tao can be known without leaving the house. The further one travels the less one knows.' Silence is better than speech: 'He who knows does not speak; he who speaks does not know.' Beware the distraction of the senses: 'The eyes of a man blind him; his ears make him deaf.' Cultivate less rather than more: 'Power and learning is adding to oneself more and more. Tao is subtracting day by day.' Submission is better than resistance: 'Rigour is death; yielding is life.' Bureaucracy is remorselessly greedy: 'The more government, the still more government.' Legalism defeats its own purpose: 'As laws increase, crimes increase.'

The *Tao Te Ching* is extremely susceptible to interpretation. When Christian missionaries first discovered the book they were so astonished to find what they thought were resemblances to the teachings of the New Testament, and particularly the Sermon on the Mount, that they called Lao Tze an inspired forerunner of Christ. Some even discovered hints of the doctrine of the Trinity, and found evidence of the Tetragrammaton, the four letters YHVH that make up the name of Jehovah.

Chinese scholars for their part read into the enigmatic verses many strange doctrines, and built up schools of thought and practice on innocuous words and isolated phrases. The expression 'divine man' sparked a search for immortality; 'long life' resulted in the manufacture of elixirs that would enable one to live for centuries; 'taste' inspired a system of dietary observances; 'harmonious infant' laid the foundation for a method of concentration which would create within one's body an embryonic seed that formed the nucleus of another, imperishable body; 'breath retention' started techniques of respiratory mysticism; the 'unknown female' sought the universal life essence in women; 'sex organ' was the beginning of a widespread cult of sexual mysticism.

Taoism actually existed long before Lao Tze, and is sometimes regarded as the primary religion of the Chinese people. One



C M Di

of its mythical founders was the fabled Yellow Emperor, Huang Ti, who lived about 2600 BC, ten centuries before the Jewish law-giver Moses. In Chinese tradition the Yellow Emperor, like Lao Tze, was reputed to talk at birth. But unlike Lao Tze a great deal of magic was linked with the personal life of the Yellow Emperor, particularly of a sexual kind. Through a combination of the names of these two founders, Taoism is sometimes called the doctrine of Huang Lao, and Taoism in later centuries came to be associated not only with the refined principles of the *Tao Te Ching*, but increasingly with occultism and with the black arts as well.

In the course of time its pantheon came to include ancient deities of sky and mountain, Buddhist gods, deified emperors, legendary and historical personages, a number of 'immortals', spirits of the stars, constellations, moon and sun, and of all things under the sun. There are guardian spirits of wind and cloud, kitchen and sewer, stone and stove, teats and intestines, tongue and teeth, literary works and account books, doors and hinges.

Most Chinese thaumaturgists have claimed kinship with the cult to add distinction to their particular brand of magic, and Taoism evolved an elaborate hierarchy of priest-magicians, both male and female, who were specialists in various branches of Chinese occultism. They communed with the dead, spoke with the ancestors, flew to heaven or hell as the occasion demanded, and cast out demons and invoked celestial spirits. They combined the role of medium, oracle, sorcerer and physician.

The Bandits

Taoism has drawn into its orbit all the floating traditions of Chinese magic and sorcery, adding considerably to the bulk of Chinese superstitions and permeating all branches of Chinese occultism. It absorbed the doctrine of the two basic principles that underlie the universe, Yang the active, male and positive force, and Yin the passive, female and negative force (see CHINA). These contrasting but complementary principles lent themselves to further elaboration along sexual lines. Yang and Yin were said to be found in greater concentration in

C. M. Dixon

The Taoist pantheon came to include a bewildering number and variety of gods and spirits, including deified emperors, real or legendary people, and guardian spirits 'of wind and cloud, kitchen and sewer, stone and stove, literary works and account books . . .' ***Left*** **Hsi Wang Wu, a Taoist deity, walking on the sea: Chinese saucer, 18th century** ***Right*** **Bronze mirror of the 3rd century AD, with figures of Taoist gods**

the human male and female respectively, but a mutual interchange was beneficial, and this was effected through sexual intercourse in certain special ways, first in normal partnership and later in group orgies, so that the Yang and Yin might be absorbed in greater variety.

Similarly the various forms of Chinese divination, including the highly respected method of the I Ching or Book of Change (see I CHING), were subject to interpretation along Taoist lines. Indigenous schools of medicine and healing, including acupuncture or the curing of bodily ills by pricking the surface of the skin (see ACUPUNCTURE), similarly claimed a Taoist derivation. Astrology or the influence of the heavenly bodies on human affairs; geomancy or the selection of propitious sites for cities, temples, palaces, private dwellings and graves, all developed on lines indicated by Taoist masters on the subject. Alchemy too evolved along Taoist lines. External alchemy concerned itself with the manufacture of elixirs of immortality. Internal alchemy combined breathing with sex techniques in which subtle fluids were manufactured by the body, and were then potentialized and reabsorbed into the system.

Pervading Unity

At the beginning of the present century we find Taoist religious beliefs and practices still carried on by numerous and mostly secret sects. Among these was the society of the 'Pervading-Unity Tao' (*I-kuan Tao*). This sect believed that the One is the root of all things and, as a principle, penetrates through and pervades all existence . . . Followers of the *I-kuan Tao* were much addicted to the use of charms, planchette, the practice of the 'three secrets' of finger signs, and magic phrases and incantations. They also abstained from meat, tobacco and alcohol. They worshipped images of all religions . . .

Werner Eichhorn, in
The Concise Encyclopaedia of Living Faiths

Finally the *Tao Te Ching* provided the theoretical basis for a number of secret societies, many of which combined banditry, sorcery and the precepts of the *Tao Te Ching* with a shrewd knowledge of military strategy and tactics, and these societies remained the bane of Chinese political and social life for more than 18 centuries. The chiefs of these societies virtually ruled large areas of China, and their priest-magicians boasted dominion over the forces of Nature, and claimed to be able to divert rivers and command the lightning.

In 1912 the newly established Chinese Republic tried to put an end to these outlaw organizations, but made little progress as many in their own ranks were themselves Taoists. But the time of the secret societies had run out. In 1930 the Red Army stormed the strongholds of the most enduring of the great societies, entered the sanctuary in their mountain stronghold in the province of Kiang-Si, and smashed all the jars in which their magicians were said to have imprisoned the winds.

BENJAMIN WALKER

FURTHER READING: L. Giles, *The Sayings of Lao Tzu* (Paragon Books); N. J. Girardot, *Myth and Meaning in Early Taoism: the Themes of Chaos* (Univ. of California Press, 1983); H. Maspero, *Taoism & Chinese Religion* (Univ. of Massachusetts Pr., 1981); Arthur Waley, *The Way and Its Power* (Grove Press, 1958).

TARA

'NOW UPON another time it chanced that Eochaid Airem, the king of Tara, arose upon a certain fair day in the time of summer and he ascended the high ground of Tara to behold the plain of Breg: beautiful was the colour of that plain.' As the king looks out over his domains he sees a splendid warrior approaching him, unusual both in his beauty and in the splendour of his weapons: 'And Eochaid held his peace, for he knew that none such had been in Tara on the night before, and the gate that led into the enclosure had not at that hour been thrown open' (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*). The majestic warrior is in fact the god Midir coming to claim his wife Etain who, in her state of rebirth countless years later, is now married to the king of Tara.

This is the Tara of the ancient Irish tales, the seat of the High Kings of Ireland, and the focus of much mythological tradition and ritual practice. Here the supernatural is constantly present, and the tales frequently make the visitation of some god or goddess the introduction to some amorous or adventurous situation associated with the otherworld. In the story of the *Adventures of Art son of Conn*, for example, we learn concerning Conn (who subsequently marries a goddess after the death of his wife) that 'Conn the Hundred-Fighter son of Fedlimid Rechtmar son of Tuathal Rechtmar . . . was once at Tara of the kings, the noble conspicuous dwelling of Ireland, for a period of nine years, and there was nothing lacking to the men of Ireland during the time of this king, for indeed, they used to reap the corn three times in the year.'

According to ancient Irish belief, a good king, one whose conduct was in complete accordance with the moral attitudes of his tribe and whose physical being was entirely unblemished, brought prosperity and peace to the land and to the livestock and to the people; the lord of Tara had to be perfect in these respects or he was deposed by his followers. All these things we learn from the rich literary tradition of medieval Ireland which casts so much light on the darkness of the Iron Age world.

The Screaming Stone

There is, moreover, another source of evidence for 'Tara of the Kings' as it was called, the 'noble conspicuous dwelling'. This is the archeological record. Excavations of the site have provided convincing proof of the veracity of the story-tellers in their descriptions of this powerful royal seat, and have given concrete reasons for the recurrent mythological episodes which characterize references to the place in the early tales.

Tara is situated on a low hill in County Meath, 23 miles from Dublin. The remains consist of various earthworks, and a Neolithic passage grave which was used again in the Bronze Age; this suggests that the Iron Age occupants of the site took over a place which was already hallowed, and applied their own religious traditions to it. The Celts venerated divine ancestors, deities who gave their names to the various tribes, and several of their sanctuary sites can be seen to have had religious associations antecedent to their own occupation. At Tara, then, Celtic traditions were clearly attached to an existing hilltop shrine, which contained a passage grave with later burials in the mound which covered it. Just as the Romans tended to construct their temples on ground already sanctified by the presence of native shrines, thereby winning over and at the same time propitiating the supernatural forces already there (as did the Christians in respect to pagan shrines), so we must expect the innovating Celts to have created their holy places at sites which had been made sacred by centuries of ritual and belief. They would thus both conquer the older forces which were believed to control the territory, and at the same time render them quiescent by continuing to observe religious rites there, but in honour of their own deities. The fact that the patron goddess of the great Assembly of Tara was Tea, who is represented in the tales as having been kept in captivity, and that two other powerful goddesses of the early tradition, Etain and Medb, were also closely associated with Tara, suggests that these may have had an ancestry much earlier than the Celtic Iron Age, and linking them to such deities as the tomb goddess of the ancient Mediterranean world.

Little is known, comparatively speaking

Tara's Halls

The harp that once through Tara's halls
  The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls
  As if that soul were fled.
So sleeps the pride of former days,
  So glory's thrill is o'er;
And hearts, that once beat high for praise,
  Now feel that pulse no more.

Thomas Moore

. . . the exaggerated pretensions of St Columcille had come almost at once into opposition with the established laws of the land, the law which enjoined death as the penalty for homicide at Tara . . . Of precisely such a nature – only with far worse and far more enduring consequences – was the cursing of Tara by St Ruadhan of Lothra. The great palace where, according to general belief, a hundred and thirty-six pagan and six Christian kings had ruled uninterruptedly, the most august spot in all Ireland, where a 'truce of God' had always reigned during the great triennial assemblies, was now to be given up and deserted at the curse of a tonsured monk. The great Assembly or Féis of Tara, which accustomed the people to the idea of a centre of government and a ruling power, could no more be convened, and a thousand associations and memories which hallowed the office of the High-king were snapped in a moment. It was a blow from which the monarchy of Ireland never recovered, a blow which, by putting an end to the great triennial or septennial conventions of the whole Irish race, weakened the prestige of the central ruler, increased the power of the provincial chieftains, segregated the clans of Ireland from one another, and opened a new road for faction and dissension throughout the entire island.

Douglas Hyde *A Literary History of Ireland*

Tara of the Kings, in County Meath, the seat of the High Kings of the Irish and 'the noble conspicuous dwelling of Ireland': a magical stone pillar, the Lia-fail, used in the ceremonies accompanying the enthronement of the High King, was said to scream in the presence of the rightful ruler

of the archeology of this ancient royal seat as yet. There are various features which have been named by antiquarians. The Mound of the Hostages, for example, which has been excavated in recent years, contains the primary passage grave and some 40 Bronze Age burials dating to c 1400 BC. The so-called Royal Enclosure consists of a hilltop enclosure with features which are again suggestive of ritual. It has also been suggested that the Banquet Hall is in fact yet another sacred enclosure of a kind known on the Continent. Other structures associated with the site would also seem to have been of a ritual rather than a domestic character.

Archeology, in conjunction with the vernacular literature, demonstrates that the Celts in general venerated stones of various kinds and that stone pillars in particular were worshipped. At Tara a magical stone pillar, known as the Lia-fail, 'Stone of Fail', was used in the inauguration ceremonies which accompanied the enthronement of the High Kings (see STONES). According to tradition, the stone used to scream when a rightful king was about to be inaugurated. A stone pillar which originally stood near the Mound of the Hostages and today marks an 18th century grave, has been taken to be the Lia-fail; it consists of a pillar of granite some five feet in height. The inauguration and choice of the High Kings was attended by much ritual, and a great bull feast (*tarbfeis*) used to be prepared whereby a seer could envisage in a trance the rightful King of Tara.

ANNE ROSS

FURTHER READING: T. P. Cross and C. H. Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales* (Figgis, Dublin, 1969); E. Evans, *Prehistoric and Early Christian Ireland* (Batsford, 1966); A. Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), *Everyday Life of the Pagan Celts* (Batsford, 1970).

TAROT

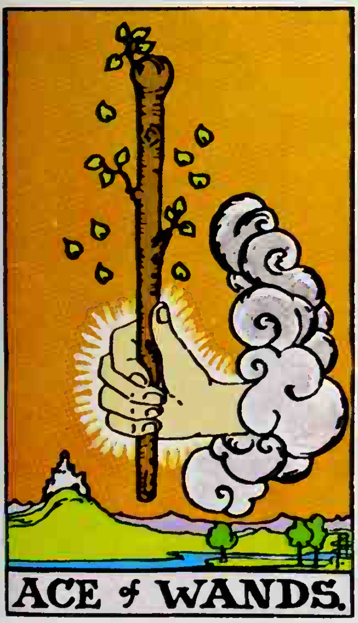
The strange and beautiful Tarot cards form a system of communication through symbols, showing the relation between God, man and the universe; the symbols act as stimuli to the imagination and it is for each student to interpret them for himself

THE UNINITIATED usually regard the Tarot as a system of fortune telling using a special pack of fancy cards. But this is the lowest, if not a debased, aspect of a method of communication by symbol which has behind it not only antiquity but esoteric knowledge. It may be described as 'the cosmic method in universal creation or emanation, including its purpose and result'. As practised by the Western user, it is generally associated with the Tree of Life of the Cabala (see CABALA) but it has also affinities with the pyramids of Egypt and with Indian theosophical philosophy. 'Like all ancient cosmic symbols which are but the reduction of natural law to the simplicity necessary for human use, the Tarot is of the utmost practical value in all senses.'

The origins of the Tarot are not clearly defined. A. E. Waite concluded that it had no exoteric history before the 14th century and the oldest examples of Tarot cards probably date from about 1390, while occult tradition places their origin at about 1200 AD. It is said that the gypsies are believed to hold the first set of cards and that they alone hold the secret of its meaning.

According to occultists, the system comes first from the East, probably from Chaldea. After the destruction of the seat of learning in Alexandria, the adepts of all countries converged upon Fez in Morocco and made it the pivot of their esoteric science; since they spoke in many tongues, they decided to create a set of common symbols which all could understand and in which their truths could be pictured. 'As a skeleton for their invention the wise men chose the relatively simple system of numbers and letters afforded by the Qubalah' (S. Mayananda, *The Tarot Today*). The Hebrew alphabet consists of 22 letters and these placed upon the 22 Paths of the Tree of Life gave a combination of bases for correspondences (see PATHS). By this system of a pack of cards containing four suits of 14 cards each and 22 trumps unconnected with the suits and called the Major Arcana, ideas could be exchanged without the necessity of either the spoken or the written word.

The four suits are designated Wands, Cups, Swords and Pentacles, symbolizing amongst other things fire, water, air and earth: in each suit are four court cards: the King, the essential Self, 'Spirit', in man; the Queen, the 'Soul' or inner pattern part of a particular human personality; the Knight, representing the special focusing of energies and a personal sense of selfhood; the Page or Esquire, standing for the Body or personal vehicle. These four court cards correspond also to the four letters of the sacred Name of God in Hebrew theology – *Yod, He, Vau, He* (see NAMES). Yod is represented by the Kings of the four suits, and more especially by the suit of Sceptres or Wands, and it stands for the First Principle – the origin of all things. The first He symbolizes substance, in opposition to essence, and this is represented by the four Queens and by the suit of Cups, the form which contains the Life and the Feminine Principle. Vau which indicates Affinity completes the Trinity, and is pictured by the bond of love and the mystery of union exemplified by the four Knights and the suit of Swords. To stop there would indicate Finality. So the fourth court card, that of the Page or Esquire, represents the second He, marking the transition from the metaphysical to the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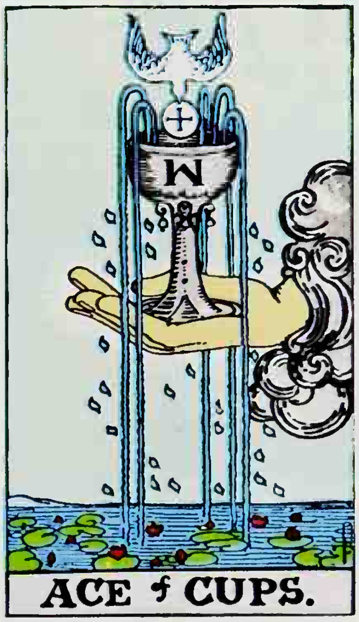

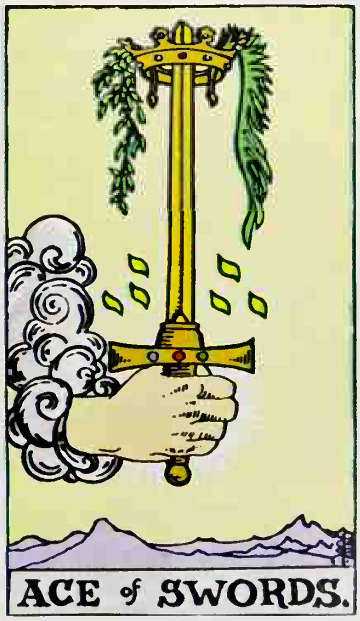
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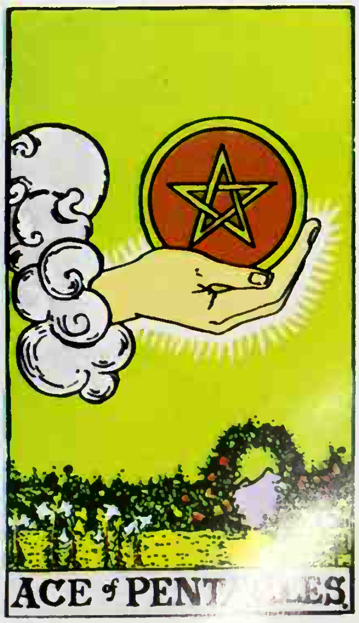
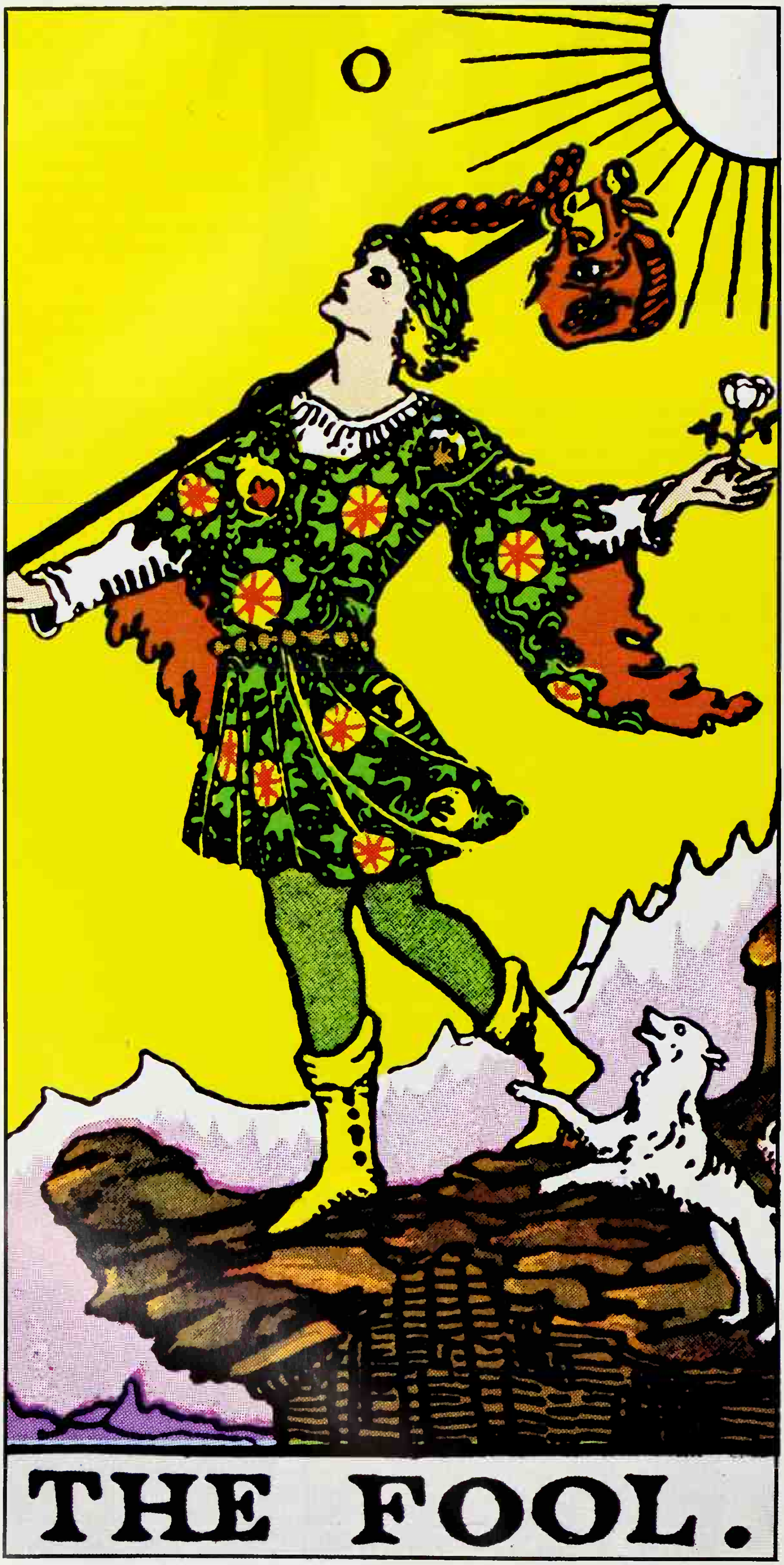
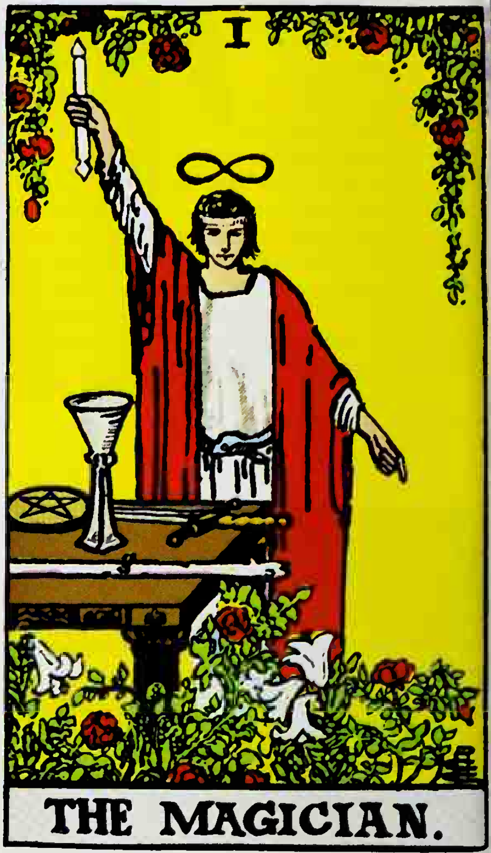

ACE of PENTACLES.

According to occult tradition, the Tarot pack was invented by adepts and forms a complete symbolic system. Different packs use varying designs and symbols, but there is a rough general similarity. The pack has four suits – Wands, Cups, Swords and Pentacles (*below*) – of 14 cards each, plus 22 extra cards called trumps or Major Arcana

Tarot Production Inc





The trumps of the 'Waite' pack, drawn by Pamela Coleman Smith under the direction of A. E. Waite: this is probably the best-known and most often used version of the Tarot pack though the cards, shown on this and the following pages, vary from the traditional designs of older packs in many respects

material world – God in man made manifest. This is the suit of Pentacles or Coins, the symbol of material gain but also the five-pointed star which leads man from the unreal to the real.

The Tarot in its cabalistic form sets out to show the relation between God, Man and the Universe, and amongst other things it is a symbol of incarnation. It is one of those immemorial systems which were destined to convey this abstruse fact to mankind in a form that could be appreciated even by almost submerged awareness. Oswald Wirth says that a symbol is designed precisely to awaken in our consciousness the memory of that which we have already known. In other words, the use of the Tarot evokes the associations which we have already formed in the past. In *Le Symbolisme Hermetique* he states that 'a symbol can always be studied from an infinite number of points of view and each thinker has the right to discover in the symbol a new meaning corresponding to the logic of his own conception. Symbols are intended to arouse a thought by means of suggestion and thus cause the truth which lies hidden in our consciousness to reveal itself.'

P. D. Ouspensky (see OUSPENSKY) postulates that only a symbol can deliver man from the slavery of words and formulas, and allow him to attain to the possibilities of thinking freely: '. . . occult knowledge cannot be transmitted either orally or in writing.

The Tarot in its cabalistic form sets out to show the relation between God, Man and the Universe; amongst other things it is a symbol of incarnation

It can only be acquired by deep meditation.'

Tarota or *Taro-Rota* means the Wheel of the Law and the Law of the Wheel, and is a widespread symbol of universal life; the same idea is found in Western symbology in the phrase 'spinning of the Web'.

Dance of Life

There are various methods of using the Tarot cards; reference has already been made to placing them upon the Tree of Life, they can be paired as opposites or complementaries, or they may be set out in a circle or wheel representing the universe.

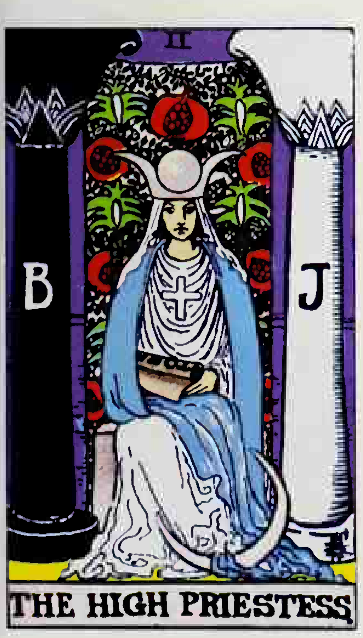
There are no standard pictures on the packs of Tarot cards. While the pictures are basically the same the presentation may vary. There is one known as the Marseilles or French pack which is probably the oldest in design and can be found reproduced in many books; generally speaking, the designs are crude and not well drawn. Manly P. Hall produced a pack drawn by Augustus Knapp but this is no longer on the market. Paul Foster Case, founder of the Builders of the Adytum, had a pack drawn by Miss Jessie Burns Parke which was very similar to the one usually referred to as the 'Waite' pack, drawn by Miss Pamela Coleman Smith under the direction of A. E. Waite; this, in turn, is generally held to be based on the Oswald Wirth symbolism, though it has been considered that in certain details Dr Waite expressed his personal ideas of symbolism rather than the traditional esoteric ones. There is no reason why any interested student of the Tarot should not make his own pack, provided that he is prepared to undertake the necessary study to incorporate the correct symbols. Instructions for interpreting the meanings of the cards may be found either in booklets sold with the packs, or in the books on the Tarot written by authorities.

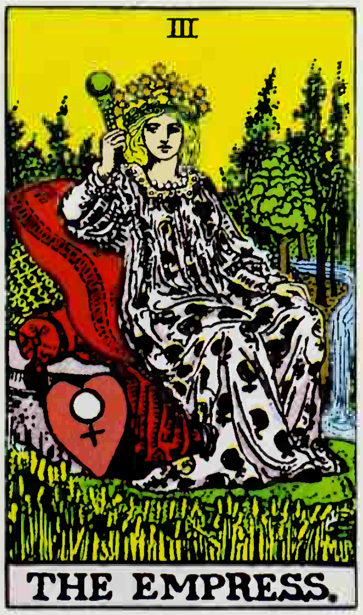
While there is an interpretation for each one of the 14 cards in each suit, either right way up or reversed, the ordinary person is chiefly concerned with the Major Arcana, the trumps, since these are the only cards used in dealing with the Tree of Life or with the system of the Wheel.

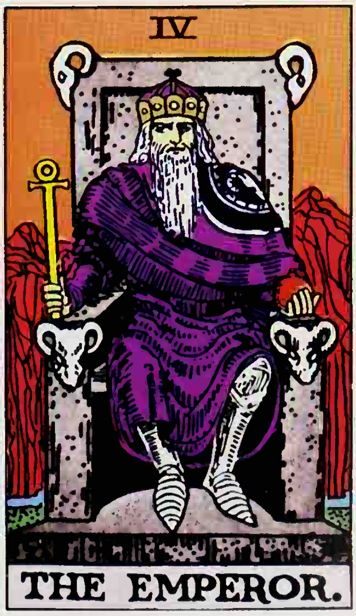
There are 21 numbers on the cards, and a zero. This is the attribute of the Fool and its position has been the subject of much discussion. Where does one place 0 and what is its significance? Taking the cards in numerical order it would seem clear that 0 should precede 1, yet Papus, one of the best known and most authoritative writers on the Tarot, places it between 20 and 21, and takes it to refer to the Animal Kingdom, that is the Kingdom of Instinct and not of Mind. If it precedes 1 the subsequent cards will fall sensibly upon their paths on the Tree, ending with the card called the Universe on the final path leading to Earth – the Plane of Matter. Israel Regardie says '0 must precede 1. This is the most logical place for it'.

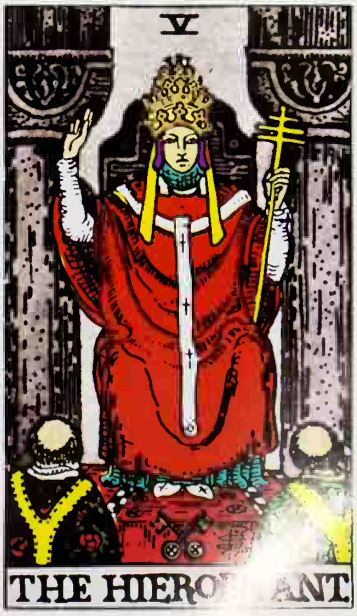
If the method of the Wheel is worked 0 will be placed in the centre as the hub; the remaining 21 cards will fall naturally into three segments of seven apiece, and when studied their mutual correspondence, either complementary, fulfilling or opposing, will be clear. There is a legend that once upon a time a man made a magical table and placed on it statuettes of the major trumps modelled as small golden figures. By his own great knowledge of the mysteries he was able to set the figures in motion and they wove in and out of the figures of the Dance of Life, so that he could see the pattern of evolution. But it was not given either to that adept or to his disciples to be able to move the 22nd figure – that of 0 or the Fool; for if the Fool joins in the dance the world is completed and there is an end to all things as we know them.

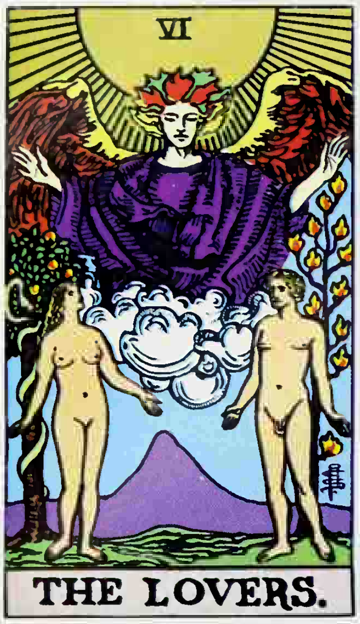
In this case the Fool represents the mystery of the Divine Love; when that is understood and he takes his place among the dancers there will be no more sorrow and no more misunderstanding, for the former things will have passed away. It will be the Golden Age in reality; we shall see ourselves in proper relation to God and man; we shall

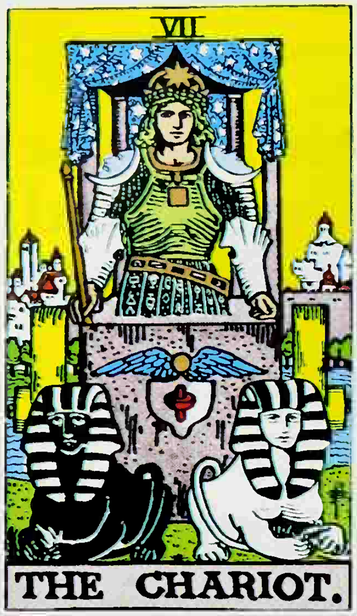


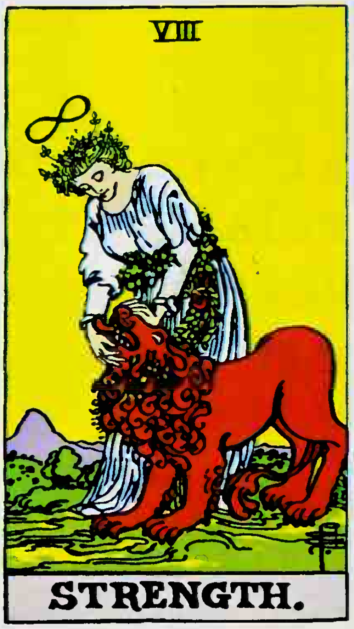


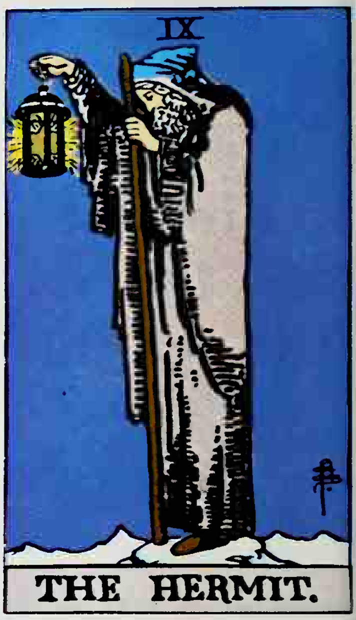












indeed be united with the Highest and therefore there will be nothing left for which to struggle.

The trumps of the Major Arcana, their sequence and their general meaning are:

0. ***The Fool.*** The picture is of a young man, a bundle over his shoulder, a dog at his heels, gaily treading a cliff edge with no regard for where his steps are leading him. To those who have begun to perceive the esoteric meaning of the cards, this carefree attitude is significant of the man who has followed the Divine Law and become as a little child. In German the title of the card is *Der Sille*, which means the Holy or Innocent one.

1. ***The Magician.*** In exoteric packs this card is sometimes labelled 'The Juggler'; in the Marseilles and other French packs it is called *Le Bateleur*, which means 'the holder of a small farm or estate' in Old French; no previous origin of the word is known, but it could be that the card is intended to represent a lesser Sun. The man in the picture has a figure eight shaped device over his head, a lemniscate, the sign of Universal Life. One of his hands points upwards and the other down, while before him lies a table on which are displayed the four suits of the Tarot pack.

2. ***The High Priestess.*** She sits between two pillars in the place of Equilibrium; partially veiled, a book upon her knees, she is typified in the Book of Wisdom and in the mystical poets; she is the feminine aspect, the reflection of God. In Egypt she represents the Isis of Nature whose veil must not be raised by the profane.

3. ***The Empress.*** This shows a fine woman with flowing hair; she wears a crown with 12 points, signifying the diffusion of the First Principle in the same way that the 12 signs of the zodiac are disseminated and yet form a perfect whole. The card signifies the basis of Reality.

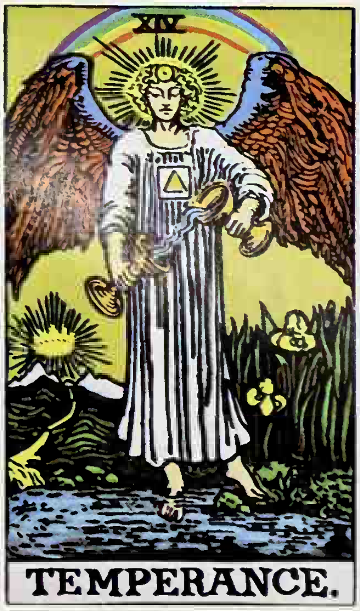
4. ***The Emperor.*** He represents the positive or active form of the Empress; he wields a sceptre which has always been taken as an attribute of the progenitor.

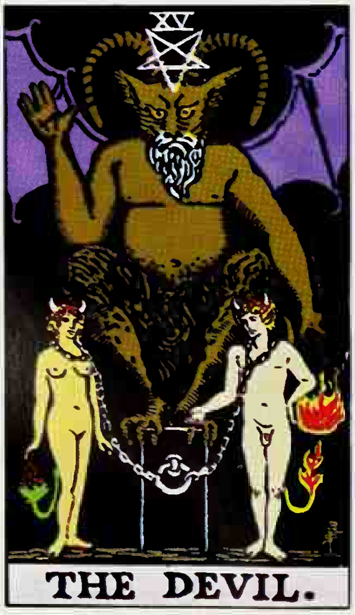
5. ***The Pope or Hierophant.*** This is the complementary opposite of the High Priestess, who is the instructress of the initiates to whom she imparts occult knowledge. The Hierophant gives this knowledge to ordinary people in a practical and oral form that they can understand.

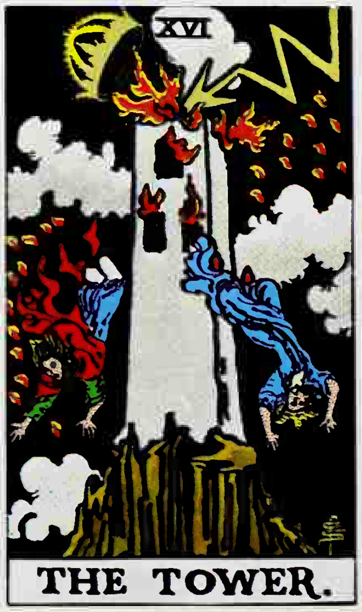
6. ***The Lovers.*** This card represents on one hand the dual nature of man: when the child is first conceived its sex is not determined; the potentials of both sexes are carried by every embryo and one sex is finally assumed in the material world. But the lovers also symbolize the most powerful of all the emotions; love properly expressed brings unity with the beloved, so that this dual card is both an analysis and a synthesis.

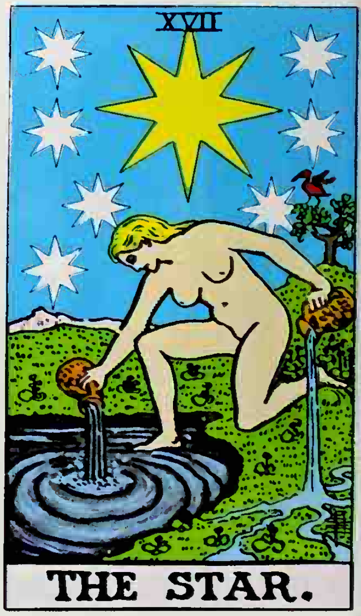
7. ***The Chariot.*** This portrays the man who has vanquished the elementary forces. It is the final card of the first seven into which the 21 numbered trumps are divided when they become a triad in the Wheel system; on the Tree of Life in the Hebrew version the card corresponds with the Hebrew letter *Zayin*, which signifies Victory in All Worlds.

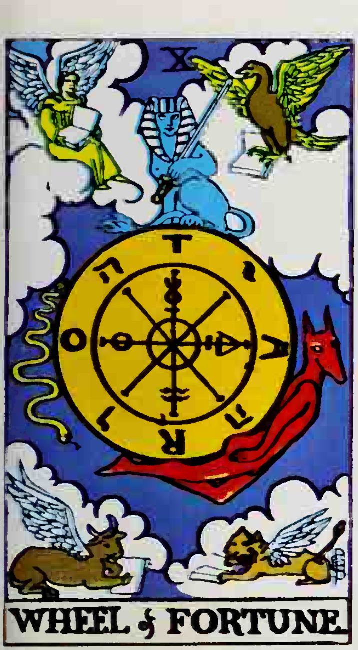
8. ***Justice.*** This card stands for equilibrium in all worlds and in all forms. Occult science has been taught in word and in deed; the sword and the balance are the reward of a man's acts, whether they be black or white. As a man sows, so shall he

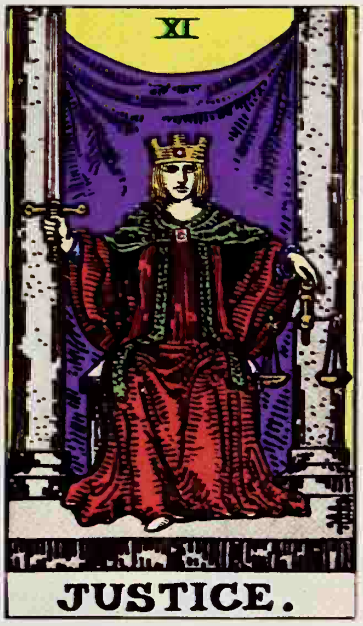


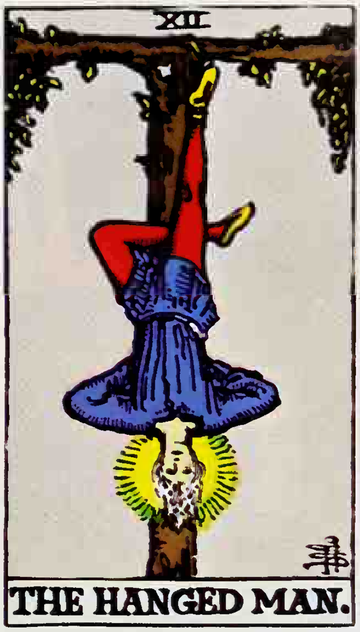


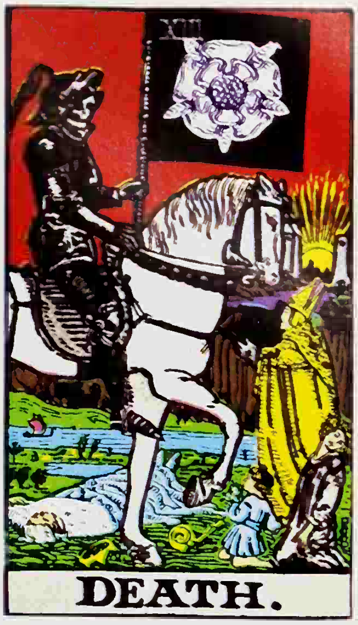












reap. (In the Waite pack, illustrated here, and in several later ones, cards 8 and 11 are transposed.)

9. ***The Hermit.*** This card sometimes pictures an old man and sometimes a young one. If he is old he is thought to be the man aged in years who yet has a young heart; if he is a young man, he is one who has already learned to walk in the right way. He wears the cloak of protection, carries the lamp of wisdom and is supported by the staff of righteousness. His quality is prudence, and some packs will give the card this name rather than that of the Hermit. His significance is silence regarding the Inner Knowledge.

10. ***The Wheel of Fortune or the Wheel of Life.*** This card does not denote anything in the way of chance but is the symbol of the eternal action of time, the continuous rotation of the aeons, the mutable laws each recurring in turn and then resting in Equilibrium.

11. ***Strength.*** This is the strength of the young girl closing the mouth of the lion; above her head is the lemniscate – the sign of spiritual life and virility. Here is the counterpart of the young child in the cockatrice's den; she is Sir Galahad in opposition: 'my strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure'. Galahad the boy knight is as sexless as this maiden.

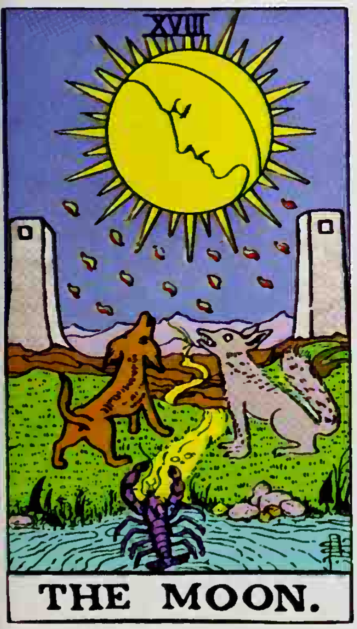
12. ***The Hanged Man.*** This most curious of all cards has been given different interpretations by different writers but it is generally accepted that it stands for Equilibrated Power. In the Hebrew alphabet the letter *Mem* accompanies this figure on the path of the Tree and is one of the three 'mother letters', standing for water. In all occult matters the element of water signifies a change of plane or of consciousness. This man has come far enough on the road to find absolute submission to the Will Divine.

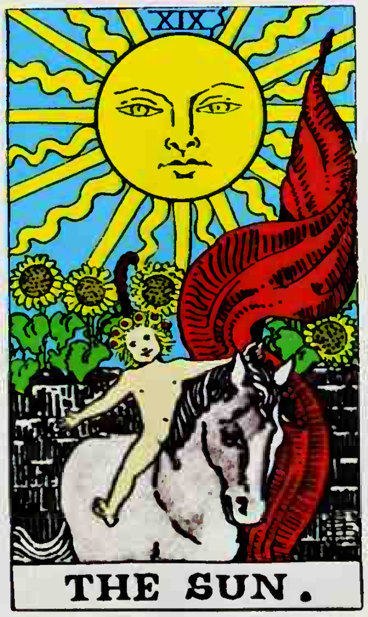
13. ***Death.*** Death is the culmination of life in the exoteric sense; in the esoteric meaning it is the passing from one stage of progress to the next. Death has been termed the Negative of Realization, the universal link between material and spiritual. Nearly all versions of this card are based upon a skeleton, and include the very ancient phallic symbol of the sickle or curved blade.

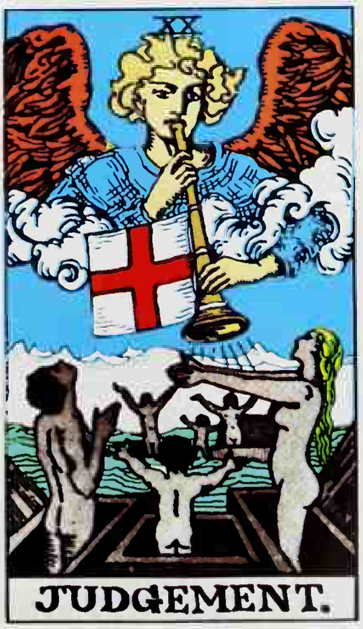
14. ***Temperance.*** Here man is individualized. The water of life is being poured out and he has the power to accept or reject it for himself.

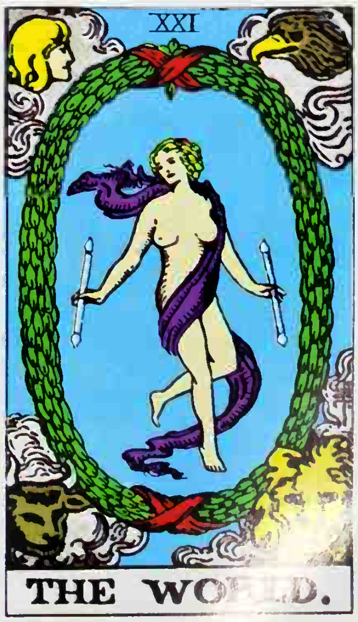
15. ***The Devil.*** This is a card which has puzzled many people but if it be looked at carefully it will be seen to represent No 1, the Magician, in reverse. The power is now misused. The right hand, the hand of power, points sometimes downwards and sometimes upwards, and those he has taken in bondage are in chains at his feet. The card is sometimes referred to as Pan, unbridled Nature, and his lighted torch is the symbol of destruction. He is to be feared and to be conquered. To allow him to gain the mastery is to allow Matter to overcome Spirit.

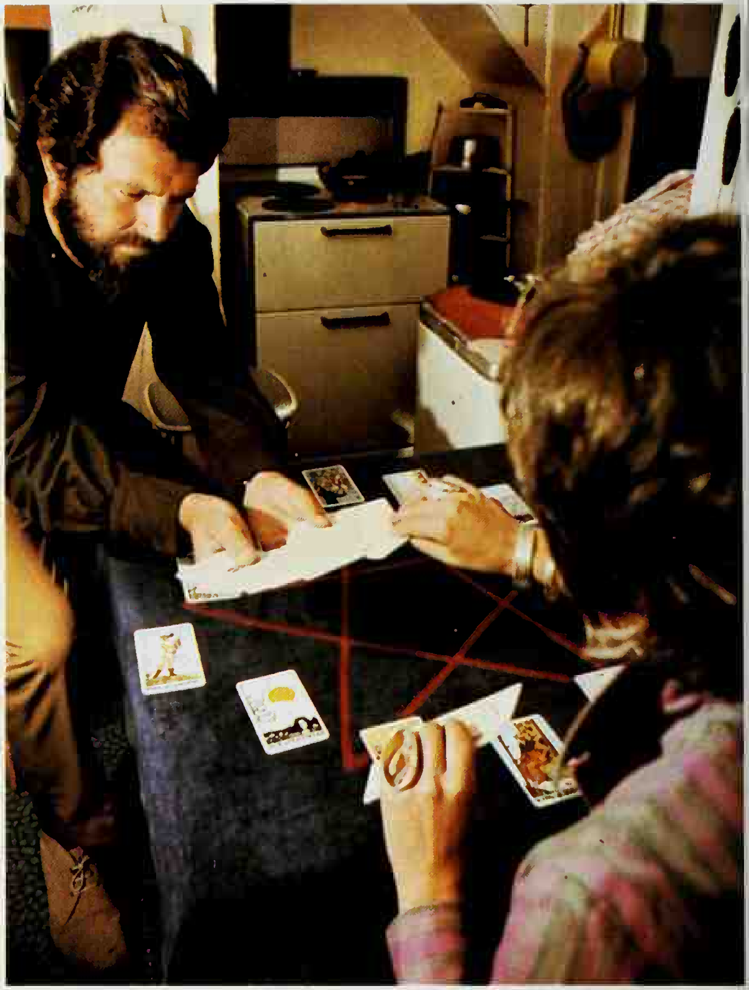
16. ***The Tower Struck by Lightning.*** This card is usually said to be symbolic of the Fall of man; here is the Tower of Babel; man is being hurled into materialism; as he proceeds down the Tree of Life he becomes more man and less God. But it must be noted that in two French versions this card is considered to be a divine happening; one refers to it as 'The Fire of Heaven' and the other as 'The House of God'.



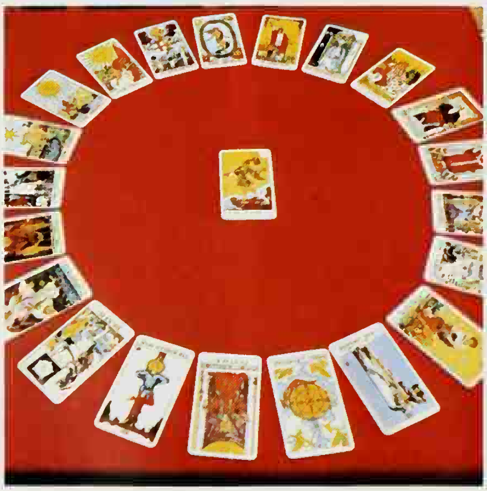








There are almost as many interpretations of the Tarot as there are interpreters, and the meanings attributed to each card vary with the understanding of the student *Above* The Tarot may be used for fortune telling, although occultists generally regard this as the lowest use to which the cards can be put; during a reading the client shuffles and cuts the cards of the Major Arcana (*left*); these are then returned to the reader, who spreads them into a fan (*right*) from which the client selects seven cards which are placed clockwise on the table *Below* The cards of the Major Arcana laid out according to the system of the Wheel; the Fool is placed in the centre as the hub, and the student of the Tarot then meditates upon the significance of the cards, either complementary, fulfilling or opposing



Pat Keene/Mahlig

17. ***The Star.*** This picture represents the Word in action in Nature. The butterfly or ibis symbol is a sign that the spirit is not lost though man may have far to go; the spirit will survive and the Fall is not irreparable.

18. ***The Moon.*** Here again is comfort for the soul in involution. The material world is only a reflection; man can descend no lower, and the Spirit is now immersed in Matter from which it must eventually start to climb again. Yet other writers have other ideas. S. Mayananda says, 'The picture presented by this Trump is a terrible travesty of what should be shown, or rather it is but the negative half. It seems to have been dictated by sorcerers or the Church in whose teaching the "world" is merely an evil condition to escape from to "Heaven".' And an Indian writer, Govinda, says of this card 'the symbolism of the elements moves on many planes'.

19. ***The Sun.*** This picture represents the first of the elemental kingdoms beginning its slow progress by development back to God. Spirit is renewed in a different form; man is freshened for his evolutionary climb and the mineral kingdom is slowly individualizing.

20. ***Judgement.*** Life is progressing a little further up the stairway, for this trump governs the evolutionary development of the vegetable kingdom.

21. ***The Universe.*** Here in this last card the macrocosm and the microcosm have met. Here the Earth of matter is represented in the four quarters – the four Worlds – and here the four animals of the Apocalypse and of the vision of Ezekiel are depicted. It is the reconstruction of the synthesis of all and the figure of the androgyne is lightly veiled; as with the Lovers, sex is undefined. This represents in one form God in man at the foot of the middle pillar of the Tree of Life.

These are the major trumps of the Tarot pack. Only one suggestion of meaning can be given by any one person in a limited space; and it must be remembered that there are meanings to each trump according to the understanding of each student, and that they are intended to act as stimuli to the imagination. Each and every writer on the Tarot will have something different to say, will develop another aspect; all anyone can do is to suggest an approach. This is a system of universal communication by symbol and therefore it must be sufficiently fluid to allow each man to use it as an expression of his ideas on the Absolute. The more that is read about the Tarot; the more the cards are meditated upon, the greater will be the flow of understanding and the wider the comprehension.

(See also CARDS; WALDENSES.)

CHRISTINE HARTLEY

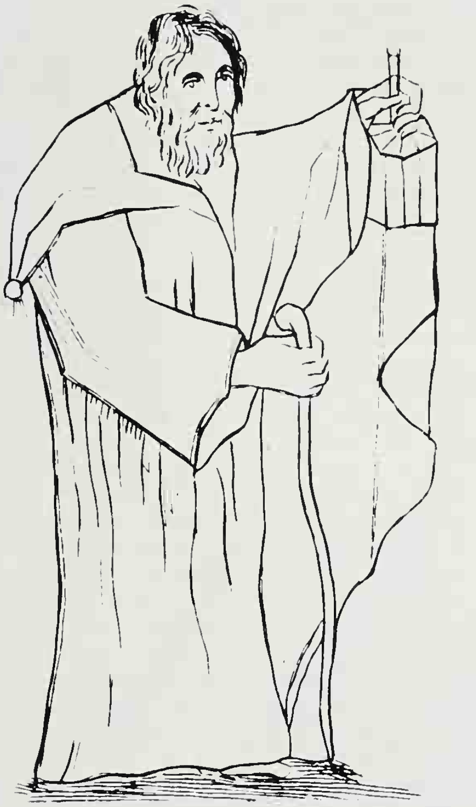
FURTHER READING: P. F. Case, *The Tarot* (Macoy, 1977); M. Dummett, *Game of Tarot* (Duckworth, 1980); S. Kaplan, *The Encyclopedia of Tarot*, (U.S. Games Systems, 1978); Gareth Knight, *Practical Guide to Quabalistic Symbolism* (Weiser); R. Cavendish, *The Tarot* (Harper & Row, 1975); Papus, *Tarot of the Bohemians* (Weiser); A. E. Waite, *The Holy Kabbalah; The Pictorial Key to the Tarot* (Citadel).

The Origins of the Tarot Pack

'IF ONE WERE TO LET IT be announced that there survived to this day an ancient Egypytian work, a book that had escaped the flames which devoured their superb libraries, and which contained, unsullied, their teachings on important matters, everyone, no doubt, would be in a hurry to acquaint themselves with such a precious and remarkable book. And if one added that this book was widely distributed throughout much of Europe, and that for many centuries it has been available to everybody, people's surprise would be vastly increased; and would it not reach its highest pitch when they were assured that nobody had ever imagined it to be Egyptian, that it was held to be nothing, that no-one had ever attempted to decipher a single page, and that the fruits of infinite wisdom were regarded as a collection of fantastic pictures without the least significance in themselves? Wouldn't it be thought that one was amusing oneself at the expense of the listeners' credulity?...

'Nevertheless, it is true: this Egyptian book, sole relic of their superb libraries, survives today. Indeed, it is so common that no scholar has deigned to concern himself with it; before ourselves, nobody has ever suspected its illustrious origins. This book is composed of 77 or perhaps 78 leaves or pictures, divided into five classes, each presenting objects as varied as they are entertaining and instructive: this book is, in other words, the game of Tarot.'

It was with these words that Court de Gebelin began page 365 of the eighth volume of his *Monde Primitif* (1781). He was an obscure Protestant theologian from southern France, who devoted ten years of his life to writing this untidy hodge-podge of unscholarly speculation on the survival of ancient myths, symbols and primitive languages; and more than two-thirds of the way through such a vast work is scarcely the most prominent place to find a statement that will make an author's name – yet it is solely for what he had to say about the Tarot that Court de Gebelin is remembered.



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Above **Figure of the Hermit, from Court de Gebelin's *Monde Primitif*; allowing for the inept drawing and engraving, it is evidently identical with card VIII of the present-day *Ancien Tarot de Marseille* published in France by Grimaud (*below, far right*). The evolution of the figure can be traced from the late 15th-century image attributed to Mantegna (*below, far left*); this is Saturn as Cronus, the god of Time, devouring his children, and the pose is closely reflected in the figure from the near-contemporary Visconti-Sforza, otherwise known as the 'Bembo', pack (*below, centre left*), in which the identification with Cronus is confirmed by the hourglass. The next phase of modification, from which the 'Marseille' Hermit is possibly derived, is to be seen in the 'Gringonneur' pack (*below, centre right*), long thought to date from 1392, but now known to have been made a century later**

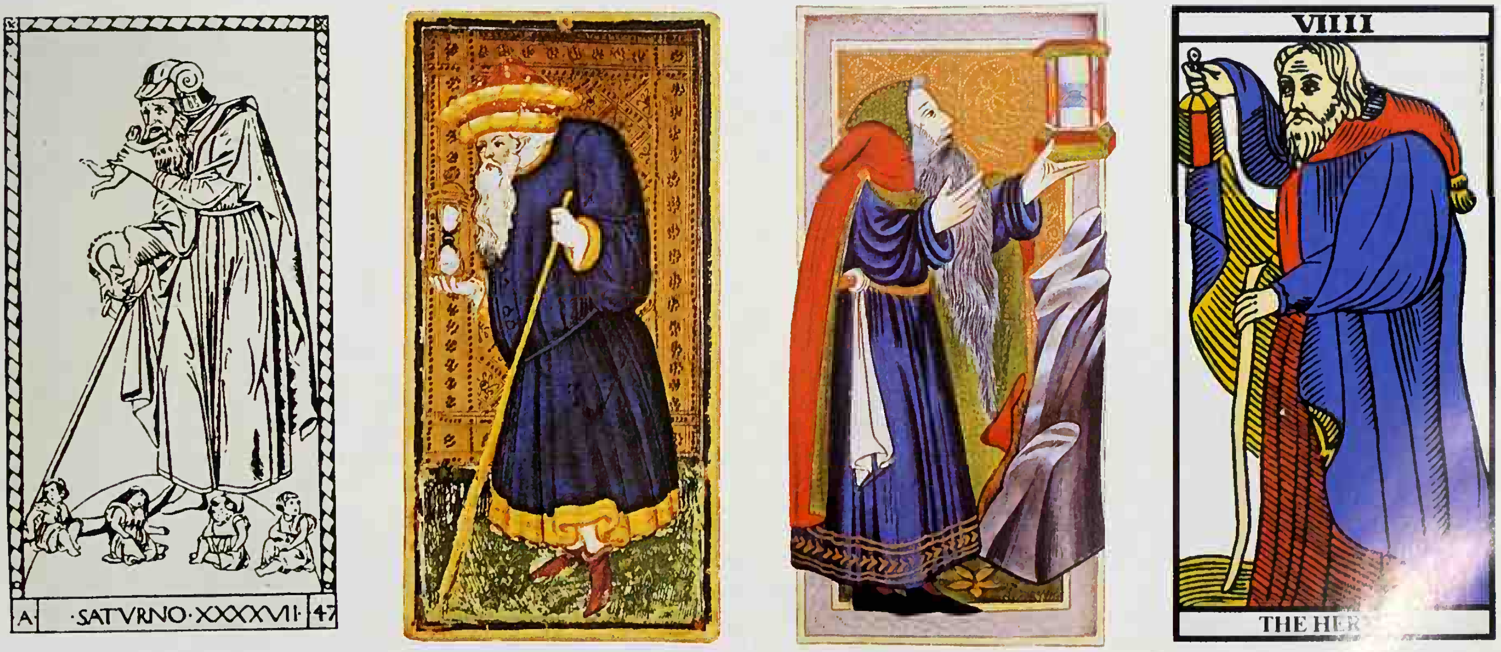
The origins of playing cards are obscure. One theory is that they developed from the same source as the game of chess: the Indian game of *chaturange* has four groups of pieces, each comprising king, general, horseman and a phalanx of foot soldiers; while one Chinese card game has the same name as Chinese chess, *keu-ma-paou* (chariots-horses-guns).

Tradition attributes the introduction of playing cards to Europe, either to the Crusaders or to the gypsies, but the first identifiable reference to cards is in the 14th century. A German monk named Johannes, writing at Brefeld in Switzerland, says that 'a game called the game of cards has come to us in this year 1377'. The last Crusade began in 1270, and the Christians were finally driven out of Asia Minor in 1291; and although there were a number of condemnations of gaming and dicing during the following century, there was no mention of cards, which makes it improbable that they were brought by the Crusaders.

The chronicler Giovanni Covelluzzo, in his history of the Italian town of Viterbo (1480), closely confirms Johannes's statement: 'in the year 1379 the game of cards was brought into Viterbo from the country of the Saracens, where it is called *naib*'. And since the gypsies did not appear in Europe until the 15th century, they cannot be credited with the introduction of playing cards.

Covelluzzo's account is particularly interesting in view of the fact that cards are known to this day in Spain as *naipes*, and some scholars believe the word to be of Arabic origin. Altogether, taking into account certain other indications, it seems highly likely that cards came into Europe following the Moorish occupation of Spain.

But packs of these cards, which have remained virtually unchanged in design for six centuries, did not include the 22 cards, bearing curious symbolic pictures, which are known as the Tarot trumps. They comprise 56 cards, divided into four 'suits': in addition to the king, queen and 'jack' (valet) of the modern pack used in such games as canasta or bridge, there is a horseman or



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knight. The symbols for the suits vary from country to country in Europe: in Spain and Italy they are cups, batons or clubs, swords (*espadas* in Spanish, *spade* in Italian) and gold coins: in France, the cup shape has been distorted into a heart, the club into a clover-leafed form, the sword into a pike-head, and the coin into a diamond-shaped flooring tile; in Germany the heart is the same, but the clover-leaf has been further distorted into an acorn, the pikehead into a leaf, and the coin into a round hawk-bell.

Nobody knows when the additional 22 cards were incorporated into the pack which is used in the games of *Tarocke* or *tarok*, in Germany and Eastern Europe, and *tarocchi* in Italy and along the Mediterranean coast. Court de Gebelin was familiar with the game from its popularity in the Languedoc, but he was the first to attribute mystical significance to the pack.

He wrote, with justification: 'The trumps, numbering 22, represent in general the temporal and spiritual leaders of society, the principles of agriculture, the cardinal virtues, marriage, death and resurrection or the creation; the many tricks of fortune, the wise and the foolish, time which consumes, all, etc...' The suits, he maintained – much less justifiably – represented the four classes into which Egyptian society had been divided: the pharaoh and military nobility, symbolised by the sword; agriculture, symbolised by the club; the priesthood, symbolised by the cup; and commerce, symbolised by the coin.

He also remarked upon the recurrence of the number 7: each suit comprised twice seven cards, and the numbered trumps (not counting the un-numbered *Mat* or Fool) made three times seven.

In Paris, a wigmaker named Alliette was particularly struck by these ideas. He had decided to practise as a fortune-teller, under the title of Etteilla (the reverse of his name), and elaborated on Court de Gebelin's theories. He announced that the Tarot had been written on golden leaves in a temple near Memphis, 171 years after the flood; Hermes Trismegistos had planned the work – so that it should properly be called The Book of Thoth – and it had been carried out by seventeen magi over a period of four years. To substantiate his theories, he designed his own pack, which incorporated a number of 'Egyptian' elements, and differed markedly in a number of respects from the traditional.

It was Etteila, also, who first drew attention to the fact that the number of trumps equalled the total number of paths linking the ten *sefiroth* of the cabalistic Tree of Life (see CABALA). The French occultist Eliphas Lévi (see LEVI) claimed that this indicated that the Tarot cards were older, and of greater universal significance, than even Court de Gebelin suggested; in his first book, *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, he promised to make public the original designs from which the popular cards were derived. He described these designs, but did not himself publish them, although the English freemason Kenneth Mackenzie wrote that he had seen them in 1861; and the closest indication we have is the pack drawn by Oswald Wirth (1889) to the specifications of Lévi's disciple Stanislaus de Guaita. These are in fact no more than a late 19th-century prettification of the traditional designs, with the addition of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Another of Lévi's disciples, a librarian at the Ministry of Public Instruction named Jean-Baptiste Pitois, wrote a *History of Magic* under the name of Paul Christian. Falsely, attributing his source to the Roman philosopher Iamblichus, he described the initiation rites of the Egyptian Mysteries, and the use of 22 paintings along the walls of a subterranean gallery in the Great Pyramid; his descriptions of these paintings are a highly-Egyptianised version of the traditional trumps.

With the growth of interest in the occult, both in France and in England, a wide variety of Tarot pack designs proliferated. In this respect, an important work was a slim volume published by Macgregor Mathers (see MATHERS) in 1888, and this was followed shortly, in 1889, by *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, written by the French physician Gerald Encausse under the name of 'Papus' (see PAPUS). The English translator of this book, A.E.Waite (see WAITE), designed a distinctly different, pre-Raphaelitish, pack, which was executed for him by Pamela Coleman Smith (see previous pages); then came the Golden Dawn pack (see GOLDEN DAWN), similar to Waite's but with differences of detail, and Aleister Crowley's *Book of Thoth*, painted for him by Frieda Harris (see CROWLEY), which was crowded with extra symbolism. Today, there are hundreds of different packs, each reflecting the obsessions of its designer.

But all these later packs depart further and further from the 'traditional' pack as it was described by Court de Gebelin, and as it has survived in what is now known as the 'Marseille' design. There are small inconsistencies in the engravings and descriptions in *Monde Primitif* (particularly in the representation of the 'Hanged Man', which Court de Gebelin turned upside down), but they are of minimal significance. What is quite obvious is that their source is not ancient Egypt.

The Memory Game

Indeed, there is evidence to show that the Tarot trumps are the surviving remnants of a late-medieval educational game. Before the invention of printing, the committing of knowledge to memory was of the utmost importance, and over the centuries a number of memory systems had been devised. The Roman orator Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC) was one of the first to describe such a system: it consisted of visualising a familiar room, and placing in it a succession of objects and images that represented the concepts to be remembered. The medieval mind was familiar with a vast repertoire of such images: saints with the symbols of their martyrdom, mythological characters, etc. Even today, popular symbolism retains some of these images: Hope with her anchor, or Justice with her scales.

With the invention of printing toward the end of the 15th century, these memory systems were gradually abandoned, but it is significant that some of the earliest printed books were still devoted to the art of memory, such as *Ars memorandi* (1470), or Johannes Romberch's *Congestiorum Artificiose Memorie* (1533), both illustrated with designs whose style bears a close resemblance to the Tarot trumps. Even more significant is Thomas Murner's *Chartiludium logicae* (1509), which describes, and illustrates, the cards to be used in a game for learning the essentials of logic.

It is to be expected that, as books became available for scholars, the use of memory images should have been diverted to the less-educated and the young; pictorial card games, indeed, are an important part of early education to this day. There is a set of so-called *tarocchi*, sometimes attributed to the artist Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506), which is made up of fifty images, representing ten orders of society from the beggar to the Pope, the nine Muses and Apollo, the ten principal parts of knowledge (such as theology, philosophy, music, poetry and arithmetic), the three sciences (astrology, chronology and cosmology), the four cardinal and three Christian virtues, the seven planets, the stellar sphere, the prime mover and the first cause.

This covers just about everything that a 15th-century youngster would be expected to learn. The 41 or 42 trumps of the Florentine game of *minchiate* are related, but include more popular concepts such as the Wheel of Fortune, the Tower (an image which comes to us from the *Golden Legend*) and the twelve signs of the zodiac. Fragments of a variety of various other 15th-century packs have also survived.

It is fairly conclusive, therefore, that the 78-card 'traditional' pack, as it was described by Court de Gebelin and elaborated thereafter, is an assembly of elements from a variety of sources, none of which has a mystical origin. It is interesting, however, that the iconography of the cards, deriving as it does from a long-standing tradition of memory-training, includes a number of elements that go back much farther than the 15th century. For instance: card XV, the Devil, shows a winged figure, wearing a horned helmet and standing on some kind of pedestal; a smaller devil stands either side, at a lower level, each fastened by a cord about the neck to a ring on the base of the pedestal. The whole card bears a striking resemblance to a statue of the Mithraic Zurvan, with two attendant torch-bearers (*dadophori*), discovered in a mithraeum in Ostia (see MITHRAS; ZURVAN). And, going even farther back – though it cannot be construed as lending any support to the theories of Court de Gebelin – the horned Egyptian god Set is represented in reliefs as leading two smaller attendants by ropes about their waists. Whatever their origin, the Tarot cards can evoke a sufficiency of images to satisfy any occultist.

BRIAN INNES

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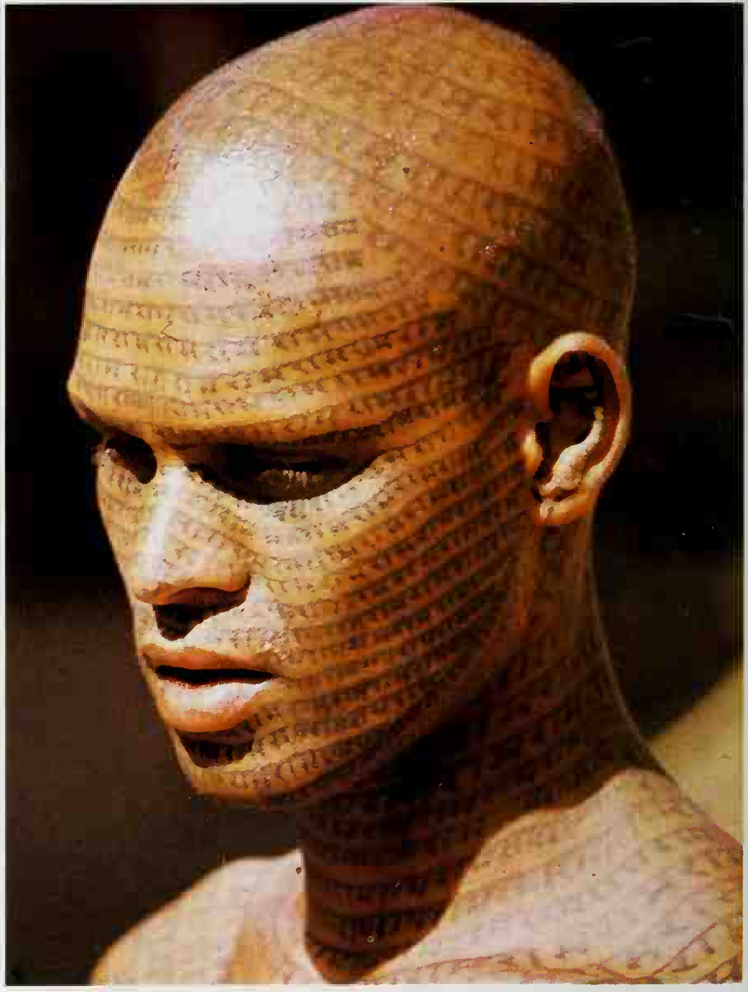
TATTOOING

John Bulmer/Uniphoto



R. K. Sinah

Among the Polynesians of the Marquesas every part of the body, face, trunk and limbs had to be tattooed; even lips, eyelids, gums and skull were not excluded

Elaborate decoration of the face and body satisfies an almost universal human drive; in many primitive societies tattooing and cicatrization have ritual importance as part of an initiation rite, and marks on the body often emphasize an individual's achievements or social status

THE URGE TO ENHANCE the beauty of the human body by artificial means is worldwide, but the techniques of doing so differ from culture to culture and age to age. Among peoples who do not wear clothes, or whose clothing is sparse, efforts at altering the body's natural appearance concentrate on the decoration of the actual surface of the skin. The most prevalent methods of achieving this may be classified as painting, tattooing and cicatrization.

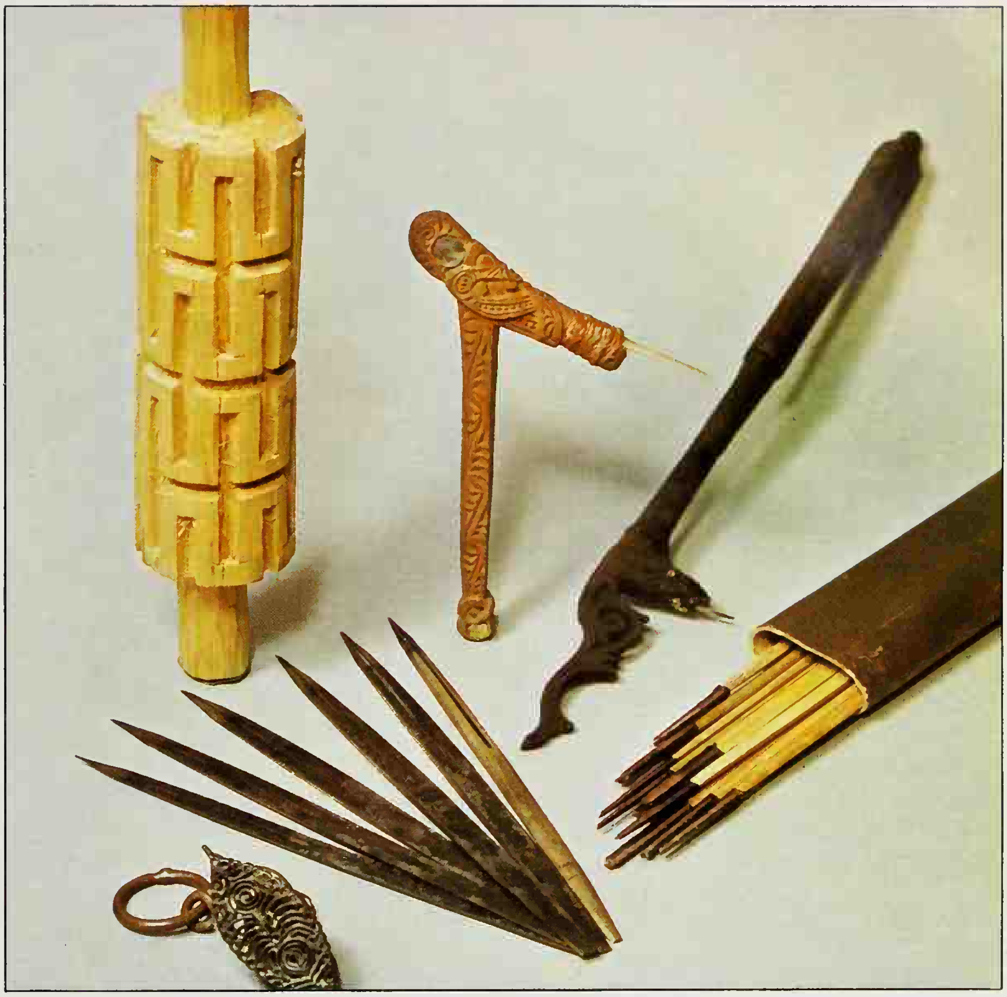
Painting includes all types of decoration in which coloured substances are applied to the skin without causing permanent discoloration. Tattooing consists of pricking pigment into the skin in such a way as to produce, under a smooth surface, a permanent pattern, usually of black or blue. This may be done in two ways. A small chisel or adze-like implement can be used to produce grooves in the skin, into which pigment is rubbed; or a needle and thread covered with soot may be drawn under the skin. In some cases the desired design is painted or imprinted on the skin with a stamp before the tattooer sets to work.

Cicatrization, which involves the artificial creation of scars, is effected by scratching, cutting, piercing or burning the skin. The wounds may be allowed to heal naturally, forming plain scars which are usually slightly depressed, or they may be aggravated so that they form deep gashes. Raised scars may be produced by continued and extremely painful irritation which results in the proliferation of regenerative tissue.

All these methods of changing the appearance of the skin are widespread, but the most extreme forms of cicatrization are confined mainly to the dark-skinned peoples of Africa, Australia and Melanesia.

The word 'tattoo', sometimes spelt 'tatu', was introduced to the Western world by Captain Cook, and is derived from the Tahitian term *tatau*, which is used to describe the marking or puncturing of the

During tattooing pigment is pricked into the skin so that a permanent pattern is produced under a smooth surface *Previous page* A tattooist at work in London *Facing page* Patterns formed by tattooing vary in different parts of the world; plain stripes are imprinted on the face, neck and shoulders of a New Guinea woman (*far left*) while a formalized design (*left*) covers an Indian's shaven head *Right* Selection of implements used for tattooing and marking the flesh includes (*back row, left to right*) a skin-marker from Guyana, tattooing instruments from New Zealand, Borneo and Japan, and (*front*) implement used in making Hindu caste-marks and tattooing tools from Burma



Horniman Museum

skin for ornamental purposes. Although tattooing in its most elaborate form was found among the Polynesians of such islands as the Marquesas and New Zealand, the technique was well known to the ancient civilizations of the Near East and the Mediterranean countries.

The pre-dynastic tombs of Egypt (c 3500 BC) contained clay figurines which bear marks suggesting tattoos, and the Egyptians of the New Kingdom (1567–1085 BC) tattooed their breasts and arms with the names and symbols of deities. In more recent times the practice has been common in many parts of Egypt, reflecting a persistence of the custom throughout more than 5000 years. Today its purpose is mainly curative, and tattooing is used for such ailments as headache, toothache, weak eyesight and possession. There are suggestions that it is a sign of sexual maturity, and it is also used to enhance sex-appeal.

In Iraq tattooing is believed to increase a woman's fertility, and her chances of becoming pregnant. It is also used for protective purposes. A woman who has had several children who have died will try to save the next by having it tattooed, for the practice is held to confer a long and vigorous life.

In Europe tattooing was known to Greek and Latin writers of the classical period. Herodotus mentions that Thracian women were tattooed as a sign of noble status, while Pliny refers to Dracian and Sarmatian men being tattooed. The custom was also current among several tribes of ancient Gaul, but was not practised by the Greeks and Romans. It seems to have disappeared from all parts of medieval Europe. The revival of tattooing among certain classes, such as sailors, may be the result of contacts with Asian and African countries where it was widespread, and often practised by professionals whose services were available to European travellers. It was common among the pre-Columbian indigenous population of the West Indies, Mexico, Central America and South America. Other areas where there is a high frequency of tattooing are Polynesia, including New Zealand, Melanesia, Micronesia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Burma. It is practised to a lesser extent in India and Tibet. Although it was common in ancient China it soon ceased to be used as decoration and survived only as a distinctive mark. Today elaborate tattoos are found mainly among primitive peoples.

In traditional Maori society (see MAORI) men of aristocratic families had their entire faces tattooed, the patterns consisting of intricate designs of curved lines which formed spirals and arabesques and emphasized the nose and chin. Each chief was tattooed with the design peculiar to his family or tribe, while the figures marked on the faces of dependants and retainers were the same in form as those by which the chief was distinguished, although they were less elaborate. During the operation of tattooing a Maori chief had to be fed through a special funnel, for he was not allowed to touch his food, and a strict taboo prevented him from communicating with anyone not in the same condition. The pattern imprinted on the faces of Maori women was much simpler than that tattooed on the men, and covered mainly the upper lip and the chin. It was a disgrace for a woman not to have her mouth tattooed, for red lips were thought to be shameful. The operation was performed as soon as a girl had reached puberty. A girl's tattoo was also a sign of her maturity in Tahiti.

The most extensive tattooing found anywhere in the world was that common among the Polynesians of the Marquesas Islands. There every part of the body, face, trunk and limbs had to be tattooed, and even lips, eyelids, gums and skull were not excluded. The tattoo was applied in several stages, each taking three to six months. It was rare for a tattoo to be completed before a man reached the 30th year of his life. The women were not as extensively tattooed. The designs and motifs in Polynesian tattoo patterns are largely the same as those used in the decoration of implements and boats; it seems that they are chiefly ornamental.

In Polynesia it is commonly believed that tattooing originated among the gods, and a similar idea is current among the Ainus, in the northern part of the Japanese archipelago. Their women are tattooed on their lips and arms in order to keep away the demons of disease, who believe them to be the wives of gods, since the gods are tattooed in the same manner.

Tattooing is an essential part of an initiation rite among the inhabitants of the Indonesian island of Mentawei, and no man who has not undergone it is allowed to marry. The tattooing is done with the aid of two little sticks, on one of which is a vertical needle. This tool is used by tapping it with the other stick to make small punctures in the skin, into which the colouring matter, the darkened sap of sugarcane, is inserted. The design starts with a convex bow running from the chin to the shoulders, and lines are also made over the breast to the pit of the stomach. The hips, arms, legs and fingers are tattooed. A man's upper legs are always tattooed just before marriage. The calves of the legs, the back of the hands, and the sides of the body are the last areas to be decorated. Formerly this was always done at the time of a special religious ceremony involving the

In some Naga tribes great ritual and social importance is attached to the tattooing of girls; the operation has the character of a 'rite of passage'

Left Fantastic animals tattooed on the mummified arm of a Siberian chief who lived in the 5th century BC *Below* Designs on a sailor's arms and chest; many seamen have themselves tattooed, as a mark of virility and heroic adventure *Below right* Intricate tattoo, typical of the elaborate designs that may still be seen in modern Japan

purification of the participants and the sacrifice of animals. This particular rite was performed to nullify the evil influence of blood shed when someone was stabbed inside the village or killed by a crocodile. A special porch was constructed to prevent the blood that flowed from the tattooing, and which was intended to 'cover the blood of the dead man', from falling on the ground. Every village has its own pattern of tattooing. After a headhunting expedition the victorious warriors were traditionally allowed to have the beheaded man's image tattooed on their bodies.

The custom of using tattoos to register martial deeds is widespread. Among the mountain tribes of the Philippines, such as the Kalingas, successful headhunters were entitled to cover their chests, and in some cases also their backs, with elaborate patterns. Even women who participated in headhunting expeditions as carriers were marked with a special sign. But not all tattooing has a symbolic character, and Kalinga women cover their necks and arms with intricate designs made from lines as a form of decoration.

The Naga tribes of the Assam-Burma borderland (see NAGAS) also tattoo the bodies, and in some cases the faces, of men who have been successful in headhunting raids. The Kanyak Nagas, in particular, cover the faces of warriors with an extensive pattern of curved broad lines, giving them a fierce expression. The tattoos on their chests consist of geometric patterns combined with small figures of men which represent enemies killed in war. However, tattooing is not confined to men and in some Naga tribes great ritual and social importance is attached to the tattooing of girls. For them the operation has the character of a 'rite of passage', symbolizing the transition from one stage of life to another.

The tattoo of an Ao Naga woman consists

Pat Keene

John Hillelson Agency

Strength from the Forest

With regard to preferences among the women as to where they give birth, it varies. But there is unanimity that if there is any difficulty at all, then the right thing to do is to go off away from the camp and into the forest, which will 'help'. The forest appears quite clearly as helper and protector in the vine and wooden medicines and charms, and in the scarification that will take place at the first sign of sickness. Even with adults this is done: the skin is cut in a number of small slits with an arrow, and some of the flesh is gouged out. The ashes prepared from forest woods and plants are made into a paste with spittle and rubbed into the wounds. When the skin grows back, the black ash is still visible beneath, and is regarded as a source of the strength and health and happiness that derive from the forest... Insofar as this strength is conveyed by washing the baby with the juice of forest vines, tattooing it with forest ashes and binding it with forest symbols, this may be regarded as sympathetic magic. But it is better regarded as the beginning of a lifetime of close intimacy between the Mbuti and the forest...

Colin M. Turnbull *Wayward Servants: The Two Worlds of the African Pygmies*

roughly of four vertical lines on the chin, a chain of lozenges from the throat to the bottom of the breast-bone, inverted Vs on the front of the shoulders and the stomach, solid squares on the wrists, an arrow pattern on the knee and lozenges on the lower part of the leg.

It usually takes five years to complete this elaborate ornamentation. When a girl is about ten or 11 years old her legs are tattooed up to the bottom of the calf; the next year her chin, chest and the front of her shoulders are completed; in the third year the pattern on the calf is done, and in the fourth year the knees are tattooed; in the final year her wrists and stomach are ornamented.

All the girls of the same age are tattooed in the same year, although in small villages there may not be enough girls to make it worth while calling a tattooer every year. In this case some of them may have reached marriageable age before their tattoo has been completed. Once a girl is married the only addition that may be made is on the wrists, and there are numerous married women whose tattoo pattern has never been completed.

Appeasing the Pain Spirit

The tattooing is carried out in the jungle near the village by old women, and no male may be present. The pattern is marked on the skin with a piece of wood dipped in colouring matter, and the girl is held firmly to the ground while the marked out design is punctured all over with an adze-like instrument to which a little bunch of cane-thorns is attached. The black colouring matter is applied once again after the blood has been washed off.

The process is exceedingly painful, and if a girl struggles and screams overmuch a fowl is sacrificed close by to appease any evil spirit that may be increasing her pain. The punctures sometimes become infected, resulting in bad sores, and a girl may occasionally lose a leg. However, considering the lack of precautions against infection, the proportion of septic cases is small.

The Baigas, a primitive tribe of middle India, also regard tattoos as greatly enhancing feminine beauty, and aesthetic considerations are foremost in their attitude to the practice. That they are inextricably linked with the function of tattoo marks as a powerful sexual stimulant is partly indicated by the fact that a girl's arms and breasts are not tattooed until she is adolescent, nor her legs until her marriage.

Tattooing seems to play a role in the skin-eroticism that is a strong sexual agent in Baiga love-making. Women themselves take great pride in their marks, mainly no doubt because they know it increases their attractiveness to their men. A woman's husband is forbidden to watch her being tattooed, and for two days afterwards she is treated as though she were menstruating. Her body is then covered with turmeric and oil, and she bathes.

A triangular decoration on the forehead is generally made when a girl is about five years old, and on the breast is the figure of a peacock or of a basket, done when the girl reaches puberty. At the time of marriage, or sometimes later, a pattern is applied to the back of the hands, and lines of dots are tattooed on the thighs.

Passport to Heaven

Among the Muria Gonds of the middle Indian highlands, tattooing is used mainly for feminine adornment. The day when she is tattooed is an important moment in the life of a young Muria girl, a real step towards maturity. It is desirable that girls should be tattooed before marriage, and if possible before they are betrothed.

The marks also appear to be a kind of passport to heaven. According to a Muria saying, 'the god of heaven will punish a girl who dies without being tattooed, but if she brings him beautiful drawings from the terrestrial regions, he will keep her with him and look after her'.

The tattooing is done by women of a special caste, and a myth relates how a goddess performed the operation on a woman of that caste at the beginning of time, and then instructed her in the art of tattooing. The method followed today is still the same as that described in the myth. Lamp-black, charcoal and pounded incense are mixed with castor oil and then burnt in a potsherd over a fire. The resulting black deposit is used as colouring matter which is pricked into the girl's skin with needles.

Some Indian tribes ascribe protective qualities to tattoo marks, particularly if they represent symbols of family or guardian deities. But in other cases they are curative; tattooing over a tumour is supposed to relieve it, for instance, and applied to the belly it will cure colic.

Some Gond men tattoo the figure of a horse on the front of their thighs, and of a saddle between the knee and thigh, to represent the horse god who can make their thighs as strong as those of a horse; or they mark each upper arm with the image of Hanuman, the monkey god who is a symbol of strength; this is believed to enable a man to carry unusually heavy weights.

Cicatrization is not unknown among the tribal people of India, although it is not used as extensively as in Africa and Australia. The Oraons of Bihar brand young boys in five or six places on one arm with a piece of burning cloth before admitting them to the bachelors' hall, and the Gonds brand their joints with burning wood in the belief that this will make them supple for dancing.

Tattooing is also widespread among the Indians of the tropical zone of South America. The usual tattoo of the Apiaca Indians consisted of three lines extending from each ear to the nose, mouth and chin. At the age of 14 a boy's face-tattoo was completed with a rectangle around the mouth, indicating that the wearer was allowed to eat human flesh. The designs on the body illustrated a man's deeds in war and hunting. They included crude representations of animals, fish, men and women applied to the arms and legs.

Among the tribes of the Xingu region a person's social importance was indicated by the width of the vertical stripe running down the middle of the face. A chief's face was tattooed all over, and gave the impression of being totally black.

While in most societies tattooing is done mainly for aesthetic purposes, it may also fulfil a protective function. The women of certain Arab communities of Morocco, for instance, have small crosses or other designs tattooed on their cheeks or the tips of their noses to avert the Evil Eye.

Scars of Adolescence

Cicatrization is widespread among the dark-skinned races of Africa, and the scars, which are produced artificially on the face as well as other parts of the body, often serve as distinctive marks by which members of a tribe or clan can be recognized (see MUTILATION). In many tribes the operation

Harald Schulz

Harald Schulz

Axel Poignant

The artificial creation of scars, cicatrization is caused by cutting, scratching, burning or piercing the skin; the wounds may be allowed to heal naturally, or they may be aggravated so that a raised scar is produced *Above left* and *above* A Brazilian Indian undergoes a form of cicatrization in which vertical lines are scratched into his leg *Above right* Aborigine woman: the cicatrix strengthens her breasts and is also decorative

forms part of the initiation rites of boys and girls, and is therefore a sign that social maturity has been attained.

Similar practices occurred among many of the aboriginal tribes of Australia, and also among the indigenous and now extinct inhabitants of Tasmania. The scars, which usually cover the chest and abdomen and sometimes also the shoulders and arms, were produced by cutting the skin with sharp shells or stone-blades and by rubbing clay or sand into the wounds to delay the healing process.

The scars are partly decorative and partly indicative of social situations. For instance, bereaved persons may inflict scarification on themselves to express their sorrow over the death of a relative. As in Africa, the operation is also performed during the initiation rites through which boys attain the status of fully privileged members of the tribe (see INITIATION).

Paint for Beauty and Status

In the course of these rites and other religious ceremonies, the Australian aborigines change their appearance by painting their faces and whole bodies in a variety of fantastic patterns. The only colours available are red, yellow, white and black, and these are applied in broad bands and stripes. The aborigines often use their own blood, which they draw from their veins, as a basis for the paint.

Body painting is also widespread among the tribesmen of New Guinea and other islands of Melanesia, where, together with the wearing of masks, it transforms the appearance of men who represent ghosts and ancestor spirits when performing the ritual dances which form part of initiation rites and agricultural ceremonies.

But the face and body are also painted for cosmetic reasons, and Melanesians make a clear distinction between decorative painting, which enhances their beauty, and the custom of smothering themselves in soot to extinguish all their attractions as a sign of mourning.

The Indians of South America, many of whom wore no clothes before they came in contact with Europeans, make extensive use of paint to adorn body and face. The most common pigments are red and bluish-black, both of which are derived from locally available vegetable substances. Some of these pigments remain indelible for ten days or more, and travellers often confused these apparently permanent painted patterns with tattoos.

Among the Indians of the Uapes-Caqueta region, body painting is widely practised by both sexes, elaborate designs being produced by a roller dye. Women paint the undersurface of the jaw and throat blue to achieve a curious sculptured effect for ceremonial occasions, and smear their faces with red pigment to ward off danger on working days. Their backs are crudely spattered with blue pigment, but care is taken with painted designs on the legs, thighs, breasts and face (see COSTUME).

Elaborate painted designs were also common among the Tupi Indians. The combination of arabesques, frets, undulating lines and other motifs differed so greatly in the various groups that a person's tribal affiliation could be immediately discerned. The design was named after an animal, the markings of which were supposed to have served as a model.

The custom of decorating the body, either permanently or temporarily, appears to exist in primitive and more advanced societies throughout the world. Tattooing and cicatrization are the most common types of permanent decoration, and though similar methods are used in widely separated countries it can hardly be assumed that the wide distribution of such techniques is entirely due to diffusion.

Specific styles, such as the elaborate tattoo patterns of Polynesia and the Philippines, which cover the whole body and represent an art form comparable to painting or sculpture, are certainly associated with a definable cultural tradition, but the actual technique of inserting pigment into the skin must have arisen independently in various parts of the world.

There can be little doubt that artificial modifications in the appearance of the body by tattooing, cicatrization and painting developed in early prehistoric times, but tangible evidence is limited by the impermanence of human flesh and the substances used. Tattooing has, however, been found on mummified corpses from tombs of the first millennium BC in the Altai region of central Asia, but such discoveries are rare; for the most part evidence is provided by stamps of baked clay which were used to apply paint to the skin, and earthen palettes used in the preparation of paint for cosmetic purposes. These palettes have been found on various Neolithic sites as well as among the ruins of higher civilizations. It seems that the modern practice of elaborate cosmetic make-up satisfies an almost universal human drive, and has its antecedents in the earliest civilizations accessible to archeological research.

Aesthetic considerations may be the most frequent, and are often the dominant, motives behind the practice of tattooing; but they are usually by no means the only reasons for the importance which many societies attach to body marks. Among peoples who lack a system of writing, tattoos and patterns painted on the body are a convenient means of recording and publicizing information about an individual's activities and achievements, and they may serve a similar purpose in societies where there are no distinctive clothes, uniforms or badges of rank to emphasize the status or social condition of persons and groups. Their role as identifying labels becomes obsolete where more precise and sophisticated symbols are available to indicate the rank of individuals or the identity of groups, but in modern society they remain a symbol of manly courage among such relatively closed communities as the Navy, the Yakuza criminal class of Japan, and the Hell's Angels.

C. VON FURER-HAIMENDORF

FURTHER READING: W. D. Hambly, *History of Tattooing* (Witherby, 1925).

Tau

Last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and so connected with the end of the world and believed to be the sign with which the righteous would be marked, to protect them in the last days; as a result, a T-shaped cross, or St Anthony's cross, became a protective device against evil.
See CROSS; TALISMANS.

Taurobolium

Rite in the Mysteries of Cybele and Attis; the initiate descended into a pit and was drenched in the blood of a bull which was slaughtered above him; after this the initiate was regarded as 'reborn'.
See BAPTISM.

TAURUS

THE SECOND sign of the zodiac, Taurus the Bull was identified by the Greeks with Zeus's transformation into a bull when he abducted Europa; to the Babylonians he was the heavenly bull whose rising marked the beginning of spring.

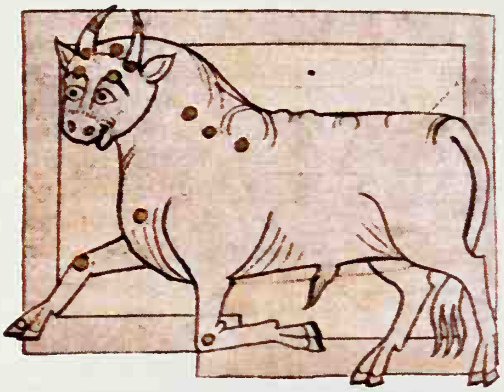
Taurus is ruled by Venus, and people born under this sign are governed by their affections; they will go out of their way to avoid ill feeling. Modest, they do not seek popularity. Because he is associated with the earth, Taurus has been described as hefty, clodhopping, obstinate, lazy and the opposite of intellectual. However, these adjectives are no longer thought to apply to the constellation. The following description, by the 1st century AD Roman astrologer Manilius, has similarly been superseded:

> Dull honest Taurus to manure the field
> Strong Taurus bears, by him the Grounds
> are till'd:
> No gaudy things he breeds, no prize
> for worth,
> But blesseth Earth, and brings her
> Labour forth.

According to modern astrologers, although Taurus is not ambitious his rewards are the fruit of his toil, and not the result of getting others to work for him. Valens, a classical writer of the 2nd century AD, says: 'Those born will be good handicraftmen, hard-working, good at keeping things, fond of pleasure and music, and generous: but some of them will be labourers, planters, and builders. And if the benefics (that is, Jupiter and Venus) aspect the ascendant, or the ruler is well placed, they become high priests or athletic trainers, and are awarded wreaths and purple robes, statues and busts, and are given charge of sacred rites and become notable and famous.'

This is the origin of the association that Taurus is supposed to have with money. In fact, this sign actually symbolizes not money but real wealth, the result of the material forces of production. However, music is also a Taurean art, and people born under Taurus are competent musicians and singers. The influence of Venus means that the Taurean is fond of pleasure, generous and more than usually amorous. The bull is naturally highly sexed, but his attitude to sex is uncomplicated and he does not need to be stimulated by artificial glamour. Taurus's keynote is devotion, to a person, an ideal or simply to his work. His love is deep, lasting and undemanding. Humble by nature, he feels that he has no right to ask anything for himself.

The Babylonians associated Taurus with the heavenly bull whose rising marked the coming of spring. People born under this sign of the zodiac are said to be good-natured and reliable; fond of pleasure, they are nevertheless hard workers, often scholars or philosophers and often extremely creative: illustration from *Stars and Marvels of the East*, a 12th century English manuscript



Bodleian Library Colour Filmstrip

Faithful Friend

Because he is ruled by Venus there is nothing heavy or unimaginative about Taurus. Although sensitive and keen-witted, the Taurean is not afraid of hard work or dirt or the unpleasant aspects of life, but accepts them as part of living. He enjoys beauty, however, and tries to avoid ugliness.

Emotionally truthful, the person born under Taurus is good-natured, reliable and a faithful friend. But he is inclined to brood, and needs encouragement. If religious, he is not necessarily conventional in his beliefs even though he is strong in faith and devotion. The Taurean gift for profound study makes scholars, philosophers and artists, and people born under this sign excel at work that requires patience.

THOMAS TAYLOR

THE FIRST TRANSLATOR of Plato's work into English was Thomas Taylor the Platonist (1758–1835). His edition, published in 1804, includes nine dialogues by Floyer Sydenham (who had died in a debtors' prison). Taylor's edition includes long introductory essays, and extensive notes, with long extracts from the Commentaries of Proclus. He also translated much of Plotinus, founder of the Neoplatonist school of philosophy, and the principal works of his successors, Porphyry, Iamblichus, the Emperor Julian, Sallust and Proclus, besides the Chaldean Oracles, the Orphic Hymns and the works of Aristotle, and many minor works. To all these he added long introductory essays and notes; of his own writings, the most important is his *Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries.*

His translations have been superseded; his English style has at all times been criticized; according to Coleridge he translated Proclus from 'difficult Greek into incomprehensible English'. S. Mackenna's translation of Plotinus is, as a work of literature, superior to Taylor's; in philosophic exactness of rendering this is not always so: he himself wrote that 'in perusing the works of these great men, the reader must not expect the sublimest truths to be explained in a familiar manner, and adapted, like many modern publications, *to the meanest capacities*'. G. R. S. Mead (whose own work on Orpheus is but an expansion of Taylor's preface to the Mystical Hymns of Orpheus) called him 'a wonderful genius and profound philosopher'; 'what was true of his critics then is true of his critics today: though they may know more Greek, he knew more Plato . . . Taylor was more than a scholar, he was a philosopher in the Platonic sense of the word.'

Taylor himself recorded that his interest in the Platonic philosophy came through mathematics; his first work (published when he was 23) was a mathematical essay; and in 1816 he published *Theoretic Arithmetic*, based upon the Pythagorean philosophy of number; a work which retains its value to the present time. But his first significant publication – one of the seminal works of the Romantic movement – was the anonymous translation of Plotinus *On the Beautiful* in 1787. This paraphrase translation of the epitome of the aesthetics of Plotinus lies at the root of that doctrine of the imagination as the formative principle of all art which Blake and Coleridge independently formulated. This little book may well be the common source of their similar ideas. Wordsworth too must have read it, for the theme of 'the inward eye' of the mind, as well as the phrase itself, comes from this tractate with its impassioned introduction and epilogue in which the young Taylor summoned his contemporaries to a revolutionary return to tradition: 'Let us then boldly enlist ourselves under the banners of Plotinus, and, by his assistance, vigorously repel the encroachments of error, plunge her dominions into the abyss of forgetfulness, and disperse the darkness of her baneful night. For, indeed, there never was a period which required so much philosophic exertion; or such vehement contention from the lovers of truth. On all sides nothing of philosophy remains but the name, and this has become the subject of the vilest prostitution: since it is not only engrossed by the Naturalist, Chemist, and Anatomist, but is usurped by the mechanic, in ever trifling invention and made subservient to the lucre of traffic and merchandise.'

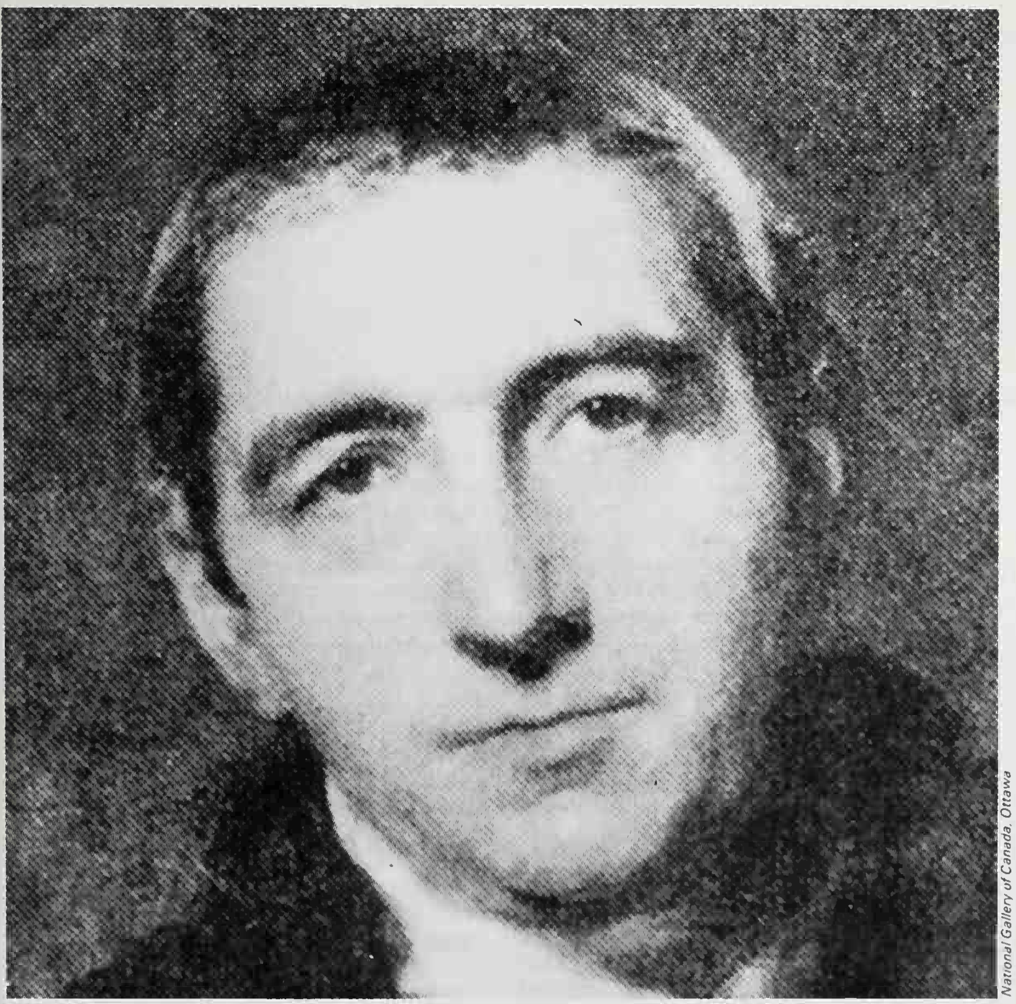
For Taylor erudition was not an end but a means 'to diffuse the salutary light of genuine philosophy', which was for him '. . . that sublime theology which was first obscurely promulgated by Orpheus, Pythagoras and Plato, and was afterwards perspicuously unfolded by their legitimate disciples; a theology which, however it may be involved in oblivion in *barbarous*, and derided in *impious* ages, will again flourish for very extended periods, through all the infinite revolutions of time'. That Taylor took seriously the ideas of the Platonists and hoped to see these ideas carried into effect, was, to the 'pedants' and 'verbal critics' with whom he carried on a lifelong battle, intolerable. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'His efforts were unfavourably – almost contemptuously – received'. For this the chief reason was undoubtedly the extreme antipathy of the age of deism and pragmatism to the Platonic philosophy as such. Taylor's works nevertheless proved seminal for the three most significant intellectual revivals of the 19th century, in England, America and Ireland.

The texts Taylor placed in the hands of the Romantic poets were the same that Ficino, founder of the Platonic academy of Florence in the 15th century, had made accessible to the Florentine painters, and their transforming effect was the same. As a translator and exponent of the Platonic philosophy Taylor must be seen in the context of that renaissance at the end of the 18th century of which the Romantic movement in poetry is only the most discernible aspect. The Greek revival had its beginnings in the visual arts, with such works as Stuart and Revett's *Antiquities of Athens and Ionia*; in the publicity that was given to the Portland Vase by the Wedgwood replicas, made at the suggestion of Flaxman, the sculptor; and with work brought to England by collectors, notably Lord Elgin. Taylor must be seen in this context, as providing the Platonic texts and the exposition of Greek theology which accompanied this rediscovery of ancient Greece. He gave, in 1787 or 1788, a series of lectures on the Platonic philosophy at the house of Flaxman; and it is likely that among those present was Flaxman's friend William Blake. The substance of these lectures is probably to be found embedded in the several long essays included in Taylor's *The Philosophical and Mathematical Commentaries of Proclus* (1788–89). In the second volume of this work is included *A History of the Restoration of the Platonic Theology by the Latter Platonists*, an impassioned discourse upon the Neoplatonic philosophers.

This essay is a manifesto; and on the title page of the first volume (dedicated 'To the Sacred Majesty of Truth') is a quotation from Isaac D'Israeli's *Curiosities of Literature*: 'Mr. T. Taylor, the Platonic Philosopher and *The Modern Plethon*, consonant to that philosophy, professes polytheism.' Taylor's polytheism was of course of a philosophic kind; his profession was perhaps made in order to add greater force to his rejection of Christianity, and his challenge to the monopoly of 'the classics' by Anglican clerics who alone could hold Fellowships at the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge.

Taylor was educated at St Paul's School; his father was a Dissenter, and Oxford and Cambridge were therefore closed to him. His father intended him to go to Aberdeen University, but he made instead a rash (but apparently very happy) early marriage, and so never went to any university, working instead in a series of ill-paid posts. Nevertheless his reputation extended to France; and the Platonic Marquis de Valady stayed for a time in Taylor's house before returning to France, there to be guillotined under the Terror. Another lodger under Taylor's roof was Mary Wollstonecraft, one of the first champions of the rights of women, who described the philosopher's study as 'the abode of peace'.

Taylor's studies were pursued in such spare time as his employment allowed; he was for some years assistant secretary to the Royal Society for the Promotion of Arts, Industries and Commerce, whose President, the Duke of Norfolk, subscribed to the whole edition of his Plato. In later years



National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Detail from a portrait of Thomas Taylor by Sir Thomas Lawrence: described by the historian G.R.S.Mead as 'a wonderful genius and profound philosopher', Taylor exposed himself to satire on account of his professions of polytheism. According to rumour – totally unsubstantiated – he had once sacrificed a bull to Jupiter in his house at Walworth, and had honoured other gods with equally appropriate rites. It is known that Taylor's Neoplatonism profoundly influenced the poetry and paintings of William Blake, and his translation of Plotinus's *On the Beautiful* may have been the source of Blake's belief that imagination is the formative principle of all art

Pierpont Morgan Library, New York

As a translator and exponent of the Platonic philosophy, Thomas Taylor must be seen in the context of his time, a period when there was a great revival of interest in ancient Greece and its works: part of the Parthenon frieze, one of the most famous of Greek antiquities, which was brought to England at the beginning of the 19th century

he found a patron, William Meredith, but it is his early works – those published before 1800 – which had the greatest impact upon his contemporaries. These were welcomed by the young Romantics for precisely those elements for which they were anathematized by the *Edinburgh Review*, Horace Walpole, and 'the black-coated gentlemen' of Oxford. The strong Neoplatonic element in Blake comes from Taylor; his works were among the 'darling studies' of Coleridge as a schoolboy; traces of Wordsworth's reading of his translations of Plotinus are to be discerned in many images and verbal echoes. Shelley possessed a copy of his Plato; and his friend Thomas Love Peacock was one of Taylor's circle of friends in later years.

By his open professions of polytheism Taylor willingly exposed himself to satire; according to rumour he sacrificed a bull to Jupiter in his house at Walworth, and honoured the other gods in no less appropriate rites. This was of course pure invention; but an episode in which the young Taylor started a fire at the Freemason's Hall while demonstrating the principle of the Perpetual Lamp of antiquity, is fact. That Taylor was a striking personality even in a generation of eccentrics is evident from his appearance in Isaac D'Israeli's novel *Vaurien*, as 'the modern Pletho'; and, many years later, as 'Mr Mystic' in Thomas Love Peacock's *Melincourt*. Coleridge refers to him as 'the English Pagan'; and he was in his lifetime always known, as he remains to the present time, as 'Taylor the Platonist'.

Taylor's 'polytheism' (or rather, his exposition of the symbolic language of Greek mythology) was for the Romantic poets the main source of the revival of mythological poetry which distinguishes their work. Blake's polytheism is contained within a Christian framework; both Blake and Coleridge gave modern guise to their gods and daemons; though Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* evidently derives in part from Taylor's writings on Odysseus as symbolically understood by Porphyry and Plotinus.

Shelley and Keats revived the Greek pantheon, but in a living way made possible by Taylor's presentation of the gods as the ever-active divine energies of the cosmos. The most important of Taylor's works on the interpretation of Greek mythology are his

British Museum/Michael Holford

Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries; *The Mystical Initiations, or Hymns of Orpheus*; Porphyry's *Cave of the Nymphs*; Apuleius' *Fable of Cupid and Psyche*, and his dissertation on daemons; Sallust's *On the Gods and the World*; and an Introduction to *The Republic*, books 2 and 3, *Containing an Apology for the Fables of Homer*. The great merit of Taylor's expositions is their fidelity to the tradition from which they derive. Bacon had set the fashion in euhemerist interpretation (referring myths to a historical basis), so congenial to the 18th century English mentality; Jacob Bryant (author of the *New System of Mythology*) and Bishop Warburton interpreted the Greeks in terms of a religion alien to them; whereas Taylor unfolded the Greek mythology in terms of the Orphic theology (see ORPHEUS) and Platonic metaphysics.

Through the enthusiasm of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Bronson Alcott the works of Thomas Taylor crossed the Atlantic to become one of the main sources of the inspiration of the Transcendentalist movement, that 'new declaration of independence made on behalf of literature and art and philosophy'.

When in 1842 Bronson Alcott visited England, he paid Taylor the compliment of collecting, with Charles Lane, a library which included as many of Taylor's books as they could find; of the 214 titles which were taken to America for the library of their 'new Eden' at 'Fruitlands' in Harvard, Massachusetts, 16 bore the name of Thomas Taylor as translator, editor or author.

In England there was little interest in Taylor from the time of his death until the beginning of the Theosophical movement (see THEOSOPHY). Through the movement Taylor became known to George Russell (the poet A.E.) and to W. B. Yeats. A.E. called Taylor 'the uncrowned king'; as Emerson had described him as 'a better man of imagination, a better poet, or perhaps I should say a better feeder to a poet, than any man between Milton and Wordsworth'. William E. A. Axon, who published in *The Library* (1890) a bibliography and memoir of Taylor wrote: 'He was an enthusiast, and only an enthusiast could have done his work. His translations represent a side of Greek thought that but for him would be unrepresented in English literature.'

KATHLEEN RAINE

FURTHER READING: *Selected Writings of Thomas Taylor the Platonist*, with an Introduction by Kathleen Raine, an essay on 'Taylor in America' by G. M. Harper, and a bibliography (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968).

TEA-LEAF READING

ALTHOUGH TELLING FORTUNES by consulting the patterns formed by tea-leaves on the base and sides of a cup is often regarded as drawing-room entertainment, it is not purely an amusement. The tea-leaves can act as a medium through which the clairvoyance of the reader is stimulated so that he or she is able to reveal truths that would otherwise remain hidden; or the figures formed by the leaves may be believed to reflect patterns that exist in the astral.

The method used in tea-leaf reading is time-honoured and simple. The client inverts her cup, turning it round three times; she places it on the saucer and then taps the bottom three times with her left index finger. The clairvoyant, who is in a light trance, picks the cup up and turns it round so that the leaves can be inspected.

All tea-leaf readers have their preferred methods of interpreting the patterns made by the leaves, and only some general indication of their meaning is given here:

Chain of small leaves: A journey, travel; if two larger leaves are in close proximity, the excursion is mental and not physical.

Serpentine chain of small leaves: a visit to the mountains; if two larger leaves are in close proximity, there will be ups and downs in daily life; inability to settle down.

Three small leaves close to one leaf: A man.

Two leaves close to a small leaf: A woman.

Group of small leaves in a triangular pattern: A child or children.

Heart: Love; a heart broken or crossed by a chain of leaves represents a broken love-affair or a divorce.

Triangle: Emotional involvement; jealousy; rivalry. If pointing downwards this shape indicates a *ménage à trois*, if upwards, ambition and success are suggested.

Square: Several different possibilities are suggested by this formation; it may mean that the person concerned is well-established, conservative and a solid character. But it can also imply a need for protection, or the client's failure to excel in his career.

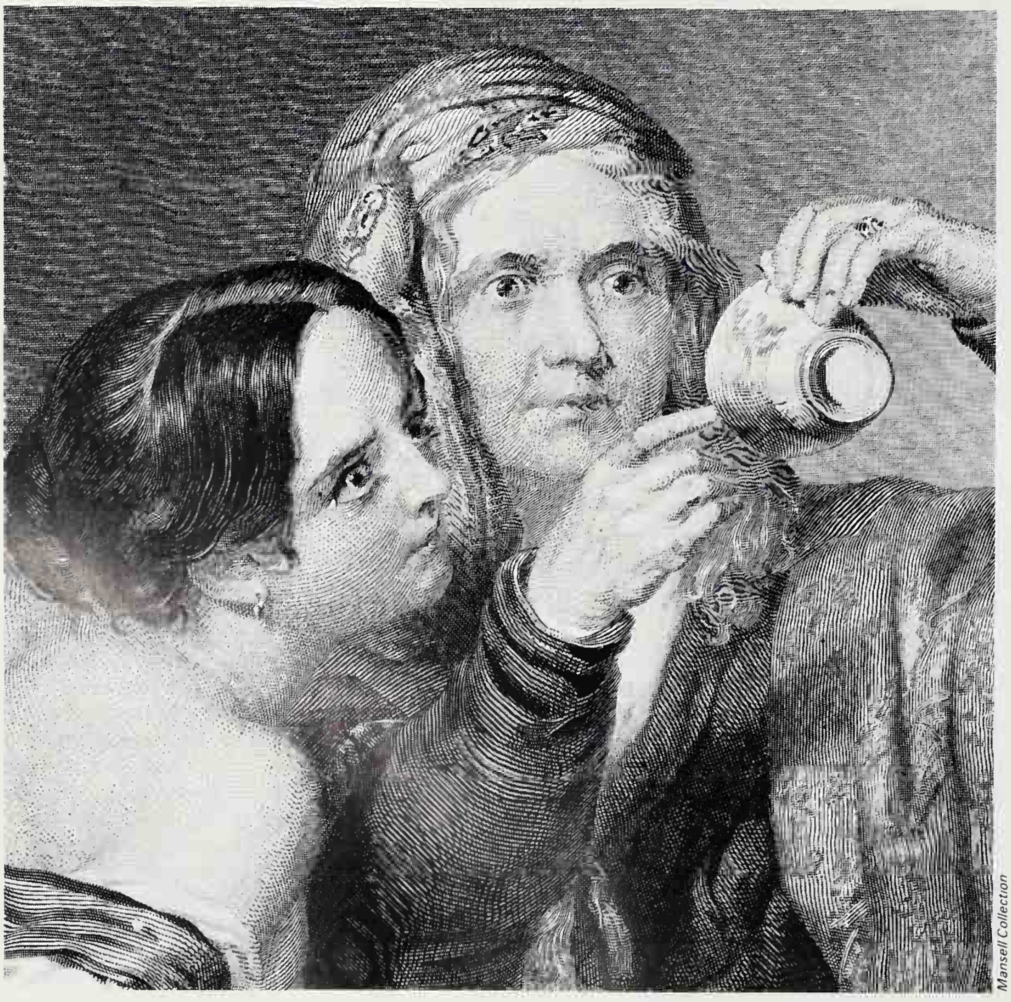
Star: Great success; a sign of genius; spiritual enlightenment. However, if it falls on or near a heart formation, the passions may be crushed and replaced by a life of asceticism.

The appearance of more complicated symbols or geometric signs needs profound study; because of their rarity they are extremely significant.

Many leaves spread all over the cup: A rich or confused character; extravagance; negligence; generosity.

Very few leaves in the cup: Clarity; direct action in the future. However, this also indicates poverty in emotional life, and if the leaves seem to arrange themselves in a provocative way they must be read with great care so that they offset the poverty of the all-over pattern.

Cup-Tossing, a 19th century engraving: tea-leaf reading is a homely branch of the old art of geomancy, the reading of omens in the patterns formed by earth, sand, pebbles or shells scattered on the ground



Mansell Collection

Cross: This means that the client is at a crossroads in life, and that a personal sacrifice may be necessary. If this pattern is in conjunction with one large leaf, it can signify death. However, care and tact should be exercised in making such an interpretation, and it should be remembered that the possible death is not necessarily that of the client. Other leaves close by will ward off danger, and show a remedy for whatever ill is likely to befall him.

Circle: Marriage; a close partnership; fame. A good omen.

Circle with a cross on it: Enforced confinement, possibly in a hospital, prison, or other institution.

Two parallel lines of leaves: A propitious journey; dreams that will come true; a long and happy life. Reinforcement of all else seen in the cup.

Dots: Letters; messages; thoughts.

Stars: Good luck.

Dashes: Surprises.

Flowers: Joy; an engagement and marriage.

Fruit: Good fortune; children.

Daisy: Simple happiness.

Gun or dagger: Danger; strife.

Scythe: A good harvest; a death warning.

Musical instruments: Good company.

Scales: Justice; success at law.

Ladder: Increasing success.

Key: Secrets revealed; knowledge.

House: Stability.

Bottle: Excess; flirtation at a party.

Envelope: News.

Fan: An indiscreet love-affair.

Teapot or kettle: Good cheer; contentment.

Pair of scissors: Angry words.

Hammer: Hard work.

There are other general indications:

Time is represented by the different levels of the cup. The rim is the present, and below this lies the near future, while patterns formed on the base refer to events that are many years ahead.

Place is indicated by the parts of the cup in which the leaves settle. Those nearest the handle tell of events that affect the home; the leaves on the sides suggest distance according to their proximity to the handle, and the ones on the base show the place of birth, nationality and hidden nature of the client.

Letters of the alphabet represent the initials of people concerned in the reading; the nearer they are to the handle, the closer their relationship to the client.

Clear symbols are lucky, with the exception of those that represent illness or death.

Faint symbols tend to be unlucky, suggesting a weak character or lack of purpose.

In occult lore the bowl of the cup corresponds to the dome of the sky, and the leaves to the stars, and there is therefore said to be a connection between tea-leaf reading and astrology. There are also correspondences between the cup, the sky and the palm of the hand, and tea-leaf reading is linked with palmistry as well as with the stars. Other correspondences, such as the link between the leaves and the moles on the body and the bumps on the head, have also been observed.

(See also DIVINATION; GEOMANCY.)

BASIL IVAN RAKOCZI

Marxist and 'hyper-Catholic', Teilhard de Chardin believed that the human race is still evolving; his vision was of humanity as a union of free persons propelled towards the God 'ahead', the point of convergence at which mankind is to find its consummation and meaning

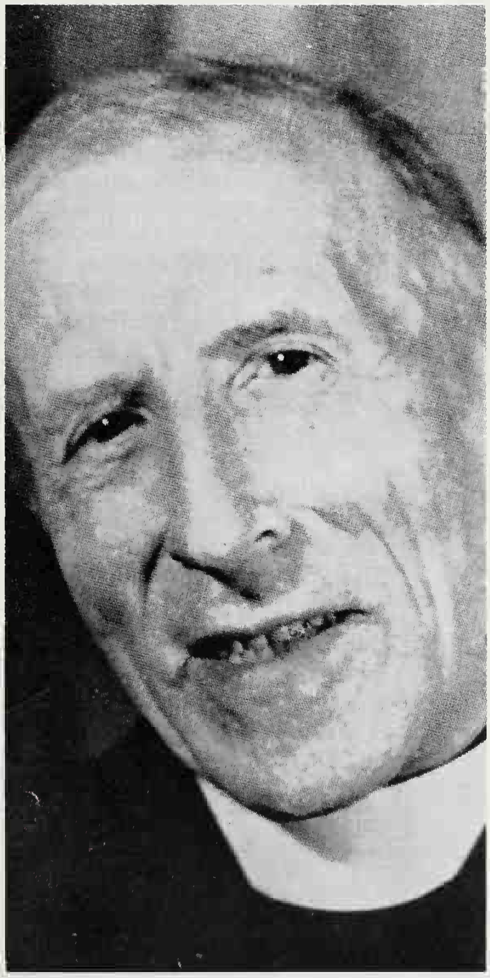
TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

BORN ON 1 May 1881 at Sarcenat near Clermont-Ferrand in the Auvergne, France, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin died of a heart attack in New York on Easter Sunday, 10 April 1955. In 1901 he took his first vows as a Jesuit and remained within the order until his death. But Teilhard was not only a priest but also a scientist – a paleontologist – of some distinction. Before his death he enjoyed a considerable reputation in his chosen field and in 1948 was offered a chair in Prehistory at the Collège de France. This offer he had to decline because his Jesuit superiors in Rome would not allow him to publish his most famous book, *The Phenomenon of Man*. For Teilhard had ideas of his own, and these did not correspond to the official Roman orthodoxy of the day. Hence his superiors considered it more 'prudent' that he should spend most of his life working 'in the field', mostly in China, while the last four years of his life were spent in the United States where the impact of his ideas was less likely to be felt than in France where he was already well known. Right up to his death, however, he was not allowed to publish anything except papers of a purely scientific nature within his own speciality, but fortunately he had the prudence to entrust his manuscripts to a friend and not long after his death *The Phenomenon of Man* was published in the original French, the English translation appearing with a warmly sympathetic introduction by Sir Julian Huxley, in 1959.

The Soul of the World

The publication of *The Phenomenon of Man* created something of a sensation. The worlds of both science and theology were split down the middle in their attitude towards the 'phenomenon' of Teilhard. Some scientists denounced him as insufficiently grounded in biology, while others took up his ideas with enthusiasm. The theologians were also split, the orthodox remaining obdurately antagonistic while the liberals hailed his totally new approach to Christianity as a real breakthrough in that it seemed to make Christianity once again relevant to the modern world. Rome severely discouraged the reading of his works since they had been published without its permission under the auspices of a committee that was largely scientific and not by any means entirely Christian. Then came Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council, and the rock of Peter, monolithic and unmoving since the Council of Trent in the 15th century, lurched forward with unforeseen and unforeseeable speed.

Teilhard was dead; but at last his ideas received a sympathetic hearing from the great majority of his fellow churchmen. Posthumously he had his reward, for the contradictions of his life reflected the integrity and completeness of his thought. Within the Church he was the apostle, prophet and mystic of a purposeful progress, and yet, despite constant setbacks, despite what often seemed petty and timorous persecution, he remained not only a loyal son of the Roman Catholic Church but also faithful to his vows of absolute obedience to the Society of Jesus and the pope. His non-Catholic friends could not understand why he did not break with such pusillanimous lack of understanding. But his own philosophy of life, and vision of the future, made it impossible for him to break away from what he saw as the one 'axis' of cohesion in a world in travail. He had been attacked as a theologian, as a scientist, and as a philosopher, but basically he was none of these things. True, he *was* a scientist but his science was the prehistoric past of this planet, whereas his real and absorbing interest was the goal towards which evolution was, in his opinion, guiding and pushing not only Earth, but the whole universe. As a theologian and philosopher he was never more than an amateur and he knew it. He was one of those awkward human beings who could not be pigeonholed into any obvious category: he was a mystic, a visionary, and a prophet.



'One of those human beings who could not be pigeon-holed into any obvious category', Teilhard de Chardin was a mystic, visionary and prophet; because his ideas did not correspond to the official Roman orthodoxy of the day, it was considered 'prudent' that he should spend most of his life working in the field, mainly in China. Although he was only allowed to publish scientific papers, he entrusted his manuscripts to a friend and his most famous book *The Phenomenon of Man* appeared in French not long after his death

Basically he saw the salvation of the world in terms of a real reconciliation between science and religion, a situation in which religion would be able to re-interpret itself in terms of evolution, and in which science itself would be 'tinged with mysticism and charged with faith', in terms of a 'synthesis of the (Christian) God "above", with the (Marxist) God "ahead"'. In scientific terms he saw the world as evolving to ever-higher stages of 'complexity-consciousness', for, quite rightly, he saw that there was no reason to suppose that evolution had suddenly come to a halt with the emergence of self-conscious man. The very troubles of our times were a sign that the human race was undergoing a new 'mutation', a new qualitative change which would result in a new and higher form of consciousness in which the individual consciousness would be transcended in some form of collective consciousness. The precursors of this were the modern totalitarian movements. During the Second World War, most of which he spent in China where he was out of touch with the ghastly realities of the European situation, he refused to see the conflicting powers as black-and-white alternatives. Nazism, insofar as it was a cohesive and progressive force, he considered as an advance on what had gone before, although he was well aware that ultimately it could only lead to an 'ant-hill' civilization, which would be an evil parody of his own vision of the 'totalization' of humanity as a union of free persons animated and propelled forward by what he had once called the 'Soul of the World' towards a unique point of convergence. He was later to call this point 'Omega', that is, God or Christ as the ultimate term of human evolution and history.

The Cosmic Christ

At a time when the Vatican under Pius XII was fulminating against international Communism as the chief enemy, Teilhard saw in it the shape of things to come. In China where he had seen it at first-hand and had witnessed the vast human energies it had been able to unleash, he was convinced that here was a power working along the very 'axis' of evolution, which no earthly force could stop. Yet he saw that the new 'totalized' society could never be wholly valid unless it were underpinned by love. 'The world cannot endure, advance, or realize itself,' he wrote, 'without the action of a power that is a species of love. This is why, much as I sympathize with the "totalitarian" faith of popular fronts, I am forced to acknowledge that their *impersonal* forms of ideal "Humanity", "Society", (*a fortiori* the "Race" or "Empire of fascist doctrines") without soul or "face", are going to nip the Evolution that they want to promote and save in the bud.' What Teilhard had been anticipating actually came to pass in an all too brief period in Czechoslovakia, when

'Communism with a human face' became a living reality.

Despite the divisive tendencies that seemed to be tearing this world to pieces during two World Wars and their aftermath, he remained incurably optimistic; for he had an unshakable faith in Christ and the Catholic Church, which he liked to speak of in biological terms as the Christian 'phylum' (in biology a 'phylum' is a main division of the animal or vegetable kingdom).

But what kind of Christ did Teilhard worship? His was not Christ as preached by the 'orthodoxy' of the Roman bureaucrats but the cosmic Christ preached by St Paul in his letter to the Colossians in whom 'were created all things in heaven and earth' and who 'holds all things in unity'. As to the Roman Catholic Church (and Teilhard, far from denying his Catholic faith, described himself as 'hyper-Catholic'), according to this same letter of St Paul 'the Church is his body, and he its head'; and 'in this body lives the fulness of divinity, and in him you too find your own fulfilment, in the one who is the head of every Sovereignty and Power.' All this was vitally real to Teilhard, and this was the 'gospel' of which he felt himself to be the prophet.

'Spirit of the Earth'

In his vision the Church was not just a divinely appointed organization designated to save individual souls through a more or less mechanical administration of the sacraments. Rather, it was a living organism – a single phylum – which had to be saved in its totality, for he could not conceive of the salvation of the part except in the context of the salvation of the whole. Nor was his God simply 'our Father which art in Heaven,' but the God 'ahead', the point of convergence at which the human race, through the instrumentality of the Church, was to find its consummation and meaning. This vision presented itself to Teilhard with irresistible force when he was serving as a stretcher-bearer in the First World War; and it never left him till his dying day.

In his vision there were two ingredients always present. Christ as the point of convergence in the future and his own almost physical awareness of the 'Spirit of the earth' – an awareness of the 'holiness' of matter and the 'essence' of the world that had 'hit' him when he was still a child and from which his 'whole internal life had sprung and grown . . . a personal psychological experience: nothing more, but also nothing less.'

A Paroxysm of Love

Teilhard was a pantheist and he knew it; but according to him there were two types of pantheism. These were what he describes as Hindu pantheism – the pantheism of diffusion and dissolution of all individual personality into an indeterminate whole – and a pantheism of 'centration' in which personality, so far from being obliterated, is heightened and clarified through love and centred on to the cosmic Christ who is the point to which all creation (or at least all of it that can be saved) is destined by evolution itself to converge. The 'oriental' pantheism of diffusion, which he had himself experienced time and again, is a blissful experience all right, but it is nonetheless essentially retrograde, a step back into a state of 'co-consciousness' before *self*-consciousness was born. The new mysticism neither abolishes personality nor sinks back into the beatific peace of undifferentiated oneness, but throws itself in a paroxysm of love into him who is both the source and goal of all personality and the collective fulfilment of all personalities.

Teilhard was both a mystic and a Marxist. He looks forward to the Marxist 'association in which the free development of each will be the condition for the free development of all' and to a state of cosmic awareness which will be suffused by love, and concentrated on and towards that ultimate unity to which evolution is driving us and which is the true goal of Christianity and the Catholic Church – Christ Omega, the cosmic fulfilment of mankind. This is the gospel according to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, humanist, Marxist, mystic, and 'hyper-Catholic.'

R. C. ZAEHNER

FURTHER READING: Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Hymn of the Universe* (1964), *Le Milieu Divin* (1960) and *The Phenomenon of Man* (1959) (Harper and Row); *Letters to Two Friends 1926–1952* (World Publishing, 1969); F. Neilson, *Teilhard de Chardin's Vision of the Future* (Revisionist Pr., 1979); R. Speaight, *Teilhard de Chardin* (Harper and Row, 1968).

Telekinesis

Paranormally caused movement of objects: examples include the fall of a picture at someone's death, the flight of the Communion wafer to the recipient's mouth, and the movement of furniture or flinging of stones or crockery in poltergeist cases; teleportation, or apportation, is the mysterious conveyance of objects into closed rooms.

See MEDIUMS; POLTERGEISTS; PSYCHOKINESIS; SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES; STIGMATA.

Telepathy

Communication between one mind and another without the use of speech, gesture or any of the normal methods of communicating; thought transference; 'the direct experience of another person's mental state'; a type of extra-sensory perception.

See EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION; SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES.

A practical and down-to-earth mystic, Teresa of Avila at the same time attained lofty heights of spiritual experience; on the one hand, an able administrator and on the other, a saint who showed the way to the ultimate fusion of the soul's being with God

TERESA OF AVILA

RECOGNIZED AS ONE of the greatest Christian mystics, Teresa de Cepeda y Ahumada, in religion Teresa of Jesus, will always be known as Teresa of Avila, from the Castilian town in which she was born on 28 March 1515 and where she spent most of her 67 years until her death on 4 October 1582. She was one of ten children – mostly boys – and when her father's second wife died in 1528, Teresa became something of an anxiety to her father, who finally put her in a boarding school, which she had to leave after 18 months owing to ill-health. He opposed her wish to become a nun, but at the age of 20 she eventually entered the Carmelite convent of the Incarnation in Avila.

The Carmelite Order, which originated in Palestine at the foot of the mountain from which it takes its name, had been, in intention, a body of hermits dedicated to extreme austerity. The extension of the hold of the Moslems in the Levant in the 13th century made life increasingly difficult, and the members of the order left Carmel for Cyprus, France, England and Spain. Progressive mitigation of the primitive rule became the accepted thing, and the convent of the Incarnation was lax in its observance and worldly in its spirit. Teresa was to reproach herself in later years for her own unfaithfulness, yet we know that during the 18 years she spent in that first convent, she seems to have had authentic mystical experiences. As the result of one of these, a vision of Christ in his Passion, she experienced a 'conversion' and began to lead a stricter life. In the year 1560, together with a small group of like-minded nuns, she decided to found a convent of strict observance, and in August 1562 she left the Incarnation for the new house, dedicated to St Joseph, also in Avila. There she was to spend what she later described as the happiest years of her life, from 1562 to 1567. It was at this time that she wrote the first version of her *Life* and also her *Way of Perfection*.

In 1567 she was ordered by the general of the Carmelite Order, then on a visit to Spain, to make other foundations. The remaining 15 years of her life were largely spent in travelling, negotiating, working with her own hands – she was, a contemporary declares, the best cook in the order. For, whilst she enjoyed the most remarkable and lofty mystical experiences, she always kept her feet on the ground. 'The Lord walks amongst the saucepans', was a famous saying of hers. In all, she was personally responsible for setting up 19 establishments, including two for men. She was helped in her work by a Carmelite friar, Fr Jerome Gracian. But her chief support in the closing years of her life came from an even greater exponent of mystical theology, John of the Cross (see JOHN).

The seal was set on her life's work when, in 1581, the distinction between the 'calced' or shod, and 'discalced' or shoeless Carmelites, as the relaxed parent body and the stricter reformed order were respectively known, was officially recognized by their separation into two orders, with separate governing bodies. She died in the following year, at Alba, one of her many foundations.

'Suborned with a Sardine'

The first important work from her pen was the *Life*, written between 1562 and 1565. It falls into four main divisions: an account of her early years, down to her 'conversion' to a life of perfection; a treatise on prayer; an account of her spiritual experiences, graces and temptations after her conversion; and the story of the foundation of St Joseph and some account of further experiences. To be grouped with the *Life* are the *Relations* which, from time to time, she wrote for the benefit of her confessors and spiritual directors. We should bear in mind that there was in Spain at the time much suspicion of those who claimed to have had special revelations, and Teresa was always anxious lest she should be deluded. Equally, her spiritual directors needed reassurance about their remarkable penitent.

The Way of Perfection, probably written in the year 1565, and rewritten before 1571, was intended as a guidebook for her nuns at St Joseph. The first part is a treatise on the ascetical preparation necessary for the aspirant to the heights of mystical experience, together with some account of 'mental prayer', the preliminary to true mystical prayer. The latter is treated, in the second part of the work, in the shape of a commentary on the Lord's Prayer.

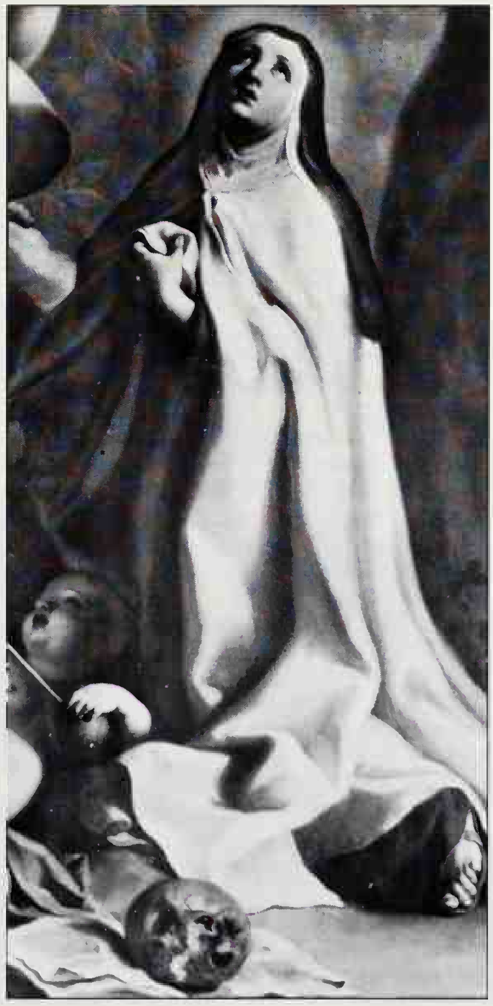
The Interior Castle, written in 1577 and revised three years later, is universally recognized as her greatest achievement. It treats of the progress of the soul from the earliest imperfect stage to the final achievement of the mystic marriage. The 'castle' is pictured as a fabulously rich building, consisting of seven 'mansions' or apartments, the seventh and central one being the dwelling place of the Blessed Trinity, residing in the depths of the soul. Thus the mystic way is a turning away from outward reality to enter 'into oneself', there to find oneself in the embrace of God.

The Foundations, written at intervals during the last nine years of her life, is basically an account of the travels, negotiations, adventures and difficulties that attended the work of setting up the different convents of the reformed order. But it also contains much practical and spiritual advice to her nuns and to their superiors.

Letters, written throughout her life, give us an invaluable picture of the woman of affairs, the negotiator, the mother, the friend, remaining a complete human being even in the times of her great mystical experiences. They bear the stamp of a remarkable personality the warmth of whose heart is equalled, it would seem, only by the range of her interests and the solidity of her common sense.

Like all mystics, who see the end of human existence as a union with God, Teresa used language which implied a disregard of, if not a positive contempt for, the ephemeral realities of this world. Since this seems to be a basic element in all types of mystical doctrine, it calls for a further study. It must be recognized that such an attitude of mind, even if it is often expressed in absolute terms, can be justified only as an appreciation of relative values. In any human situation, certain values, pleasures, satisfactions, have to be sacrificed for the sake of a more pressing, more important demand. We have seen that, in everyday affairs, Teresa was eminently practical; we know that she was immensely affectionate and sensitive; she had her natural preferences, as when she said: 'It must be my nature – I could be suborned with a sardine!'; she constantly exhorted her nuns to accept their daily, concrete responsibilities. If, then, she was fond of saying '*todo es nada*', 'everything is nothing', she meant this in the sense that everything derives its value and its significance from its relationship to God, its creator. Apart from him – if such an expression has any meaning – 'everything' is worthless and meaningless.

The Carmelite convent of the Incarnation in which Teresa of Avila spent 18 years was worldly in spirit and lax in its observance, and she later reproached herself for her unfaithfulness during this period. However, she seems to have had authentic mystical experiences while at the convent, and as a result of one of these, in which she had a vision of Christ in his Passion, she was 'converted' and began to lead a stricter life: *The Ecstasy of St Teresa* by Cignaroli



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In her description of the total process leading to final mystical union, she distinguishes two main stages – the stage in which the emphasis is primarily on human effort, and the stage where all the work is seen as done by the spirit of God. In a famous passage in her *Life*, she compares the soul to an orchard, in need of water. At first this water is laboriously drawn from a well by hand. Then, the labour is lightened by the use of a *noria* (windlass), and water pipes. Yet more effective is the irrigation of the soil by streams, but best of all is the beneficent rain of God.

The approach to God, the way of perfection, is to be achieved, then, first by the ascetical effort which 'detaches' the soul from created reality so that it may come to a clearer vision of the Creator. Such detachment, not merely from possessions but from the sort of 'natural' affection which is a kind of self-seeking, will pave the way for true charity, a total love of the other for the sake of the other. Humility, the recognition of our own insignificance before God, is seen as another kind of detachment – from comfort, health, even life, to say nothing of reputation.

Concurrently with this ascetical effort must go the cultivation of 'mental prayer', the use of imagination and intellect about the things of God. As distinct from 'contemplation' or what Teresa calls 'supernatural' prayer, this first stage is due primarily to our own striving. In general, she would lump together the asceticism and the kind of prayer that goes with it as forming our contribution, our active progress towards the stage when God 'takes over' and the soul becomes 'passive'. In the imagery of *The Interior Castle*, the first three 'mansions' represent the first stage of the soul's journey.

When the soul enters the fourth mansion, it is coming under the influence of those graces which become more and more powerful as the soul submits more and more to their influence. From a state of recollection, in which the aspirant finds less and less savour in the sort of human conversation which merely dissipates the mind, God brings the soul to the prayer of 'quiet', in which the faculties of imagination and intellect become almost completely suspended. It is, one may suggest, as though the specific qualities of the individual human personality are surrendering to the power of God. Yet, as Teresa insists, the personality does not thereby become weakened or impoverished. On the contrary, the effects of this kind of prayer are an increased liberty of spirit, a growing sense of the Infinite and 'a great mastery of earthly realities'.

The final stages of the mystic way are the steps leading to the ultimate fusion of the soul's being with the Godhead. In Teresa's analysis there are three successive experiences to be undergone. Using the analogy of marriage, she speaks first of the meeting, the introduction of the spouses. The soul is being prepared for betrothal and marriage by a minute conformity of its will with the will of God the Beloved. In the prayer of (infused) 'union', the understanding and the will become united with the Godhead, in such a way that the human being no longer understands or wills anything otherwise than as God sees and wills. During this phase, too, the soul undergoes the purification of the senses. Yet the pain of this purification, and the purification of the spirit which follows, are essential experiences in that fullness of union which, daringly described in language reminiscent of sexual ecstasy, is at once intolerably painful yet incomparably delightful. But, in the very heart and centre of the 'castle', where the mystical marriage is at last celebrated, the encounter is such that the soul, now totally forgetful of itself, lives only for God. Life is desired solely as an opportunity of serving him. A foretaste of eternal bliss, this full union represents the highest favour that God can bestow on a human soul. Perfection is achieved.

T. CORBISHLEY

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Tetragrammaton

The four Hebrew letters of the name of God in the Old Testament, spoken as Jehovah or Yahweh; regarded with profound awe it was rarely pronounced, and in the ordinary services in the synagogue the names Adonai or Elohim were substituted for it; it passed into European magic as one of the major 'names of power'.
See NAMES.

Theogony

Birth of the gods, an account, myth or theory of the origin, generation and line of descent of the gods; specifically, Hesiod's poem on the genealogy of the Greek gods.
See CREATION MYTHS; CRONUS.

The Theosophical Society does not identify itself with any particular religion, but has been described as 'a philanthropic society in that it attempts to promote a love of mankind and it is religious in that it demonstrates a spiritual background to existence'

THEOSOPHY

THE GERMAN ORIENTALIST Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900) defined theosophy as 'expressing the highest conception of God within the reach of the human mind, and the perception of the eternal oneness of human and divine nature.' The emphasis is on the intuitive, inner nature of the knowledge, something not experienced through facts open to ordinary intelligence.

It is an ancient conception, particularly in India, where the philosophical schools of Vedanta and Sankhya, and the Yoga *Upanishads* teach it. At Alexandria the philosopher Philo Judaeus (1st century AD) joined the ideas of Plato with Judaism in a theosophic system. It persisted in the Cabala and Neoplatonism, and adherents of the system appear down through the centuries. Paracelsus, Giordano Bruno, Jacob Boehme, Emmanuel Swedenborg, John Tauler and Meister Eckhardt – all taught the essential basis of theosophy (see BOEHME; BRUNO; CABALA; ECKHARDT; NEOPLATONISM; PARACELSUS; SWEDENBORG).

In modern times the name is associated with the system set out in the 19th century in her books by H. P. Blavatsky (see BLAVATSKY). She stated that she had received these doctrines from Indian teachers or masters who had reached a higher plane of being and of spiritual development. Her experiences and witness to occult feats made her salon a magnet for a wide variety of people, who usually found her in possession of out-of-the-way facts in their own special subjects. The Theosophical Society, which she founded in conjunction with Henry S. Olcott and W. Q. Judge, exercised an influence on many notable people, either by its books, or by recruiting them as members. A copy of Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence* was on Lord Tennyson's bedside table when he died. Sir William Crookes, chemist and psychic researcher (see CROOKES), was a member; so were Thomas Alva Edison, the inventor, and W. B. Yeats, the poet (see YEATS). Lord Crawford, the astronomer, was a frequent visitor in London, and the student Mahatma Gandhi made his first acquaintance with the *Gita* among the theosophists. Rudolf Steiner, editor of Goethe and founder of Anthroposophy, was for a time at the head of the German section of the Society (see STEINER).

Annie Besant (see BESANT) was criticized for her political activity in India, but she explained, in 1929: 'What I say of the Inner Government of the World I speak from personal knowledge, for I have studied and practised Raja Yoga steadily during 40 years. . . . the Freedom of India within the great Federation of Free Nations linked by the British Crown is a condition essential to the Great Plan which must ultimately succeed.'

On her death in 1933 the Vice-President, A. P. Warrington, took charge, and appointed in his own post C. Jinarajadasa, a well-loved and accomplished lecturer and author. There were two nominees for President, and some acrimony because a letter had been made public in which Mrs Besant had remarked to the recipient, Dr George S. Arundale, that he was to be her successor. The other nominee, Ernest Wood (Sanskrit scholar and former secretary to C. W. Leadbeater, who had been closely associated with Annie Besant) objected to this and himself circularized the membership. However, out of a 72 per cent vote he secured only 4825 votes against Dr Arundale's 15,604.

In 1934 Dr Arundale stated what he called the marks theosophy makes upon the chart of Life: '(1) Life is essentially one and universal; (2) Life is within a great evolutionary process whereby an infinitude of life-units move from lowliest unconsciousness through innumerable stages of unfolding to heights of self-consciousness; (3) This irresistible movement is under beneficent and immutable law, order and purpose; (4) That all good and ill fortune individual or collective are signs of this evolutionary principle at work; (5) Each life-unit can hasten or retard the pace of its own evolutionary process, through understanding or through ignorance.'

Dr Arundale married an Indian lady,

Shrimati Rukmini Devi, who did important work in the revival of the classical Indian dance, Indian art, and the education of women. As President he did not travel as widely and frequently as others, but that was partly owing to the Second World War. He did give a great deal of attention to the movement in Australia, with good results. His books on special subjects like *Nirvana*, *Kundalini*, *You* (some critics said it should be 'Me') and *Mount Everest, its Spiritual Significance*, were intended to stimulate the intuition of the reader. This applied still more strongly to his large book on symbolism, *The Lotus Fire*, which most people found too difficult.

Jiddu Krishnamurti

In the early 1900s some European male residents of the Theosophical Society's headquarters used to swim of a morning in the Adyar river. Two young Indian brothers used to watch them and then were given swimming lessons. C. W. Leadbeater had noticed the exceptional aura of the older boy, and it occurred to him that it would be interesting to look at the previous lives of an ordinary Indian boy like this and see what his history was. The boys were two of a rather large family who lived in the village on the estate, sons of a minor local official, G. Narayaniah. Ernest Wood claimed to have suggested to Leadbeater that he look up the past lives of Krishnamurti and Nityananda, and that this was done with the father's permission. Wood's idea was that most Indians he knew abhorred the suggestion that they might be reborn in the West, and he wondered if experience in different races was the general rule. Leadbeater found to his surprise that the boy had had previous lives of great significance, and he commented, 'surely he is not here by accident'.

An offer was made to the father that Mrs Besant would undertake the future education and development of Krishnamurti and Nityananda, and he signed a statement before witnesses that he had no objection to the boys being taken to England to continue their education. However, pressure from orthodox Hindu friends and relatives made the father change his mind, and he sued for the restoration of the boys; and the court ruled that they should be returned to the father by May, 1913. Mrs Besant appealed first to the High Court, Madras, where she lost, and then to the Privy Council in London. There the case was reviewed with the welfare of the boys as the first priority. The boys had stated that they wished the benefits of an English education and did not wish to return to India. The Council over-ruled the two previous decisions, allowing the father, if he so wished, to make application in England for restoration regarding the guardianship, custody and maintenance of his children.

In 1910 Dr G. S. Arundale had formed among the boys of the Central Hindu College a private association called 'The Order of the Rising Sun of India'. He meant it to include those of his pupils who believed that the coming of a great Teacher was near. This Order was opened to the public in 1911, at the instance of Mrs Besant, and shortly afterwards she altered its name to 'The Order of the Star in the East', and put Krishnamurti at its head. The Order brought out a magazine called *The Herald of the Star*, and through sympathetic members of the Theosophical Society it spread rapidly in many countries. Other members strongly opposed its intrusion upon the time and resources of its followers.

Much newspaper publicity was focused upon Krishnamurti, whom they concluded to be a 'Messiah'. This effectively prevented him being sent to an English university, as it seemed certain his life would be made intolerable. His first venture into print was while still a boy, a booklet in simple English titled *At the Feet of the Master*, in which he recorded the instructions said to have been given him in sleep by an adept. Later he tried to express his mystical feelings in collections of poems, and wrote editorials for the magazine of the Order.

In the middle and late 1920s large gatherings of Star members took place yearly, camping in the grounds of Castle Eerde, belonging to Baron van Pallandt, near Ommen, in Holland. At the time of the first Camp, an unusual and severe cyclone tore across that part of the Low Countries, and strangely seemed to bifurcate and pass on either side of the tented camp. The local villagers were much impressed in favour of the Star by this phenomenon. These gatherings with ritual camp-fires in the evening were like elderly versions of a Scout jamboree. According to Lady Emily Lutyens, on 10 August 1925 Dr Arundale brought through from his overnight experience the names of ten of the '12 apostles' of the new religious impulse that was to come through Krishnaji, as he was called.

However, Krishnamurti became increasingly impatient of being associated with theosophists. He had his own individual outlook and message. In 1929 he dissolved the Order of the Star in the East, and returned Castle Eerde and its grounds to Baron van Pallandt, who had wanted him, or a group on his behalf, to take it over. In the following years he made his base at Ojai in California, and there and elsewhere held seminars of talks and question and answer meetings. Many books, revised from these occasions, were published. He became a friend of Aldous Huxley and other original thinkers. From time to time he has visited Europe and India.

In 1927 he had a profound experience, and on 2 August he said: 'I could not have said last year, as I can say now, that I am the Teacher; for had I said it then it would have been insincere, it would have been untrue. But now I can say it. I have become one with the Beloved, I have been made simple. As I have changed, as I have found my end, which is the end for all . . . and because I have affection – and without affection you cannot attain the end . . . because I have suffered and seen and found all, naturally it is my duty . . . my pleasure, my dharma, to give it to those who have not . . . I am not going to be bound by anyone; I am going on my way, because that is the only way. I have found what I wanted. I have been united with my Beloved, and my Beloved and I will wander together the face of the earth.'

One cannot but agree with the English theosophist T. H. Redfern when he says: 'The strange and puzzling thing is that although his work has turned out much different from what was expected of him, yet Bishop Leadbeater, using his psychic faculties "picked a winner" in a lad of about

Founded by H. P. Blavatsky, in conjunction with Henry S. Olcott and W. Q. Judge, the Theosophical Society influenced many eminent figures including Mahatma Gandhi, the inventor Thomas Edison and W. B. Yeats *Below left* Mme Blavatsky, and (*left to right*) Dr G. S. Arundale, C. Jinarajadasa and N. Sri Ram, successive presidents of the Society

Psychic News

Theosophical Publishing House

12, described by Professor Wood as "a very frail little boy, extremely weak... He was bullied and beaten to such an extent that it seemed the boy might fade away from this life and die".'

On the death of Dr Arundale in 1945 C. Jinarajadasa, or 'Brother Raja' as he was affectionately called in theosophical circles, became President of the Society and so remained until 1953. He had taken his degree at St John's, Cambridge, and later studied languages so that he could lecture in French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. He continually pressed for the introduction of Beauty and Art into theosophical work. He had branched out in original directions: interviewed Mussolini in 1923; inspired the formation of a Muslim League to study the relation between Islam and theosophy; and devised a Ritual of the Mystic Star. Apart from his many excellent books, students of theosophy hold him in high esteem for his care of the headquarters archives, and the editing and publication of many documents which would otherwise have slipped into oblivion.

The successor to C. Jinarajadasa was N. Sri Ram. He was assistant editor of Mrs Besant's paper *New India* from 1923 to 1933, and was also her private secretary. In 1937 he was made Treasurer of the Theosophical Society. His lectures and writings were logically structured and full of a limpid wisdom. Even in his later years he was an active and continual traveller, and inspired the national sections by his quiet emphasis on truly spiritual and unselfish solutions to world problems. His tenure of office saw the completion and opening at Adyar of a fine new library building which, in addition to printed books, houses a very valuable collection of palm-leaf manuscripts. A new building was also erected for the printing and publishing department, with a bust of its founder Annie Besant, in the forecourt. The North American membership was particularly generous in its support of these projects.

Blueprint of Evolution

The important divergence of viewpoint between modern theosophy and current scientific thought is that the former insists that the evolutionary plan, both in the material and the non-physical worlds, pre-exists in blueprint form in the Universal Creative Mind. It cannot be substantially interfered with by man or angel. To suppose that a chance emergence of the organizing force which we call life was due to the juxtaposition of certain chemicals, water and sunlight, is regarded by theosophists as confusing the predetermined suitable conditions for life manifesting with the cause of life so manifesting.

Theosophy harks back to Pythagoras (see PYTHAGORAS), and indeed to ancient India, in underlining number as a guide to understanding the scheme of things. There is One Supreme, the Logos or Word, expressing itself in a triple mode or Trinity. Seven distinctive streams of energy from the One pour out into 12 areas of expression. Creation is a continuous, or rather cyclically recurring, process throughout the Universe.

The widespread variety of stages in cyclic development occurring among suns, planets, supermen, men, animals, and lower kingdoms, permits the maximum economy of energy by using the mutual aid and interaction between the older and younger lives. For example, man in his extraction and manufacture of metals for his own use is speeding the development of the minerals. The failures and backward units of one cycle become the wise and stable shining lights of another or later cycle.

Self-conscious man, in theosophical theory, is the product of an extraordinarily long evolution, not only as to his body, but as to his thinking and emotional consciousness. The innermost unit of consciousness is divine in origin – 'the One willed to become Many' – but the bridging sheaths, through which that unit or monad can contact the physical world, have been taken over by him from some animal which reached the peak of animal consciousness. Then a long pilgrimage of incarnations is required to develop the means to become self-conscious at the highest levels, and ultimately conscious of unity with the One. These lives or incarnations are linked and moulded by the operation of the law of adjustment, or Karma (see KARMA). This law continually tends to balance outgoing forces. Energy continuously expended towards an objective must bring success if it lies in the realm of the possible. But it can produce an imbalance in the individual, and a back-surge of unexpected results if it is selfishly motivated.

Shrimati Rukmini Devi; the wife of Dr G.S. Arundale, she played an important part in the revival of classical Indian dance, Indian art, and the education of women

C. Nelson Stewart

The prehistory of mankind goes back, in the theosophical system, not tens of thousands, but millions of years. Seven great human types will develop during the earth's present cycle of activity, and we are already well through the fifth type. But there are natural phenomena which shut off the great races from each other – ice ages, subsidence into the ocean, earthquakes and volcanic storms. These catastrophic events are initiated and controlled by non-human intelligences under the command of the Planetary Logos. Hence the last word does not lie with man, who thinks he is now powerful enough to devastate his home in space.

Later theosophists have published what they claim to be life-stories and incidents recovered by clairvoyance from the 'memory of Nature'. Something similar is done by what are called object-readers or psychometrists in regard to more recent events. One extraordinary compilation by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater purports to describe in detail the infra-structure of many of the chemical atoms and molecules. So far no bridge has been found between their diagrams and models and the mathematically-based arrangements of the physicists. They tell us that the ultimate physical atom is built in a spiralling vortex of about 14,000 million bubbles in *koilon*. Koilon, it seems, is what fills space. In this study of the building bricks of matter it is interesting to hear that the atoms themselves alter in their capacity to respond to vibrations as the cycles proceed. And it must be admitted that these seers stumbled upon isotopes before the scientists did.

An early Vice-President like A. P. Sinnett thought membership should be sought in the upper classes, and their acceptance of the ideas would filter down to the lower orders. When Annie Besant was at her peak as a travelling lecturer, the membership probably reached its highest level. When the post-Revolutionary spread of Russian power took place, the countries dominated were unable to maintain theosophical societies. To some extent counterbalancing the loss, many new centres opened in South American countries as a result of tours by C. Jinarajadasa, who was able to lecture in Spanish and Portuguese. In 1925, when the Order of the Star in the East was flourishing world-wide, its membership exceeded 100,000 – or more than twice that of the Theosophical Society. The largest groups of Theosophical Society members today are found in India, the United States and England. The Society's international headquarters remain at Adyar, and its American base is at Wheaton, Illinois.

C. NELSON STEWART

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